no. **2**

The Institute for the Study of Insurgent Warfare:

INSURGENCIES

★

A Journal on Insurgent Strategy

2016

The Institute for the Study of Insurgent Warfare:

INSURGENCIES

A Journal on Insurgent Strategy

no. **2**

2 0 1 6

CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION
TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS

> *The questions remain:*
> - *Does insurrectionary anarchism mean the conscious intensification of attack by individuals and groups? Or is it the generalization of revolt its tools and skills—to every part of society? Are these two mutually exclusive?*
> - *What is the point of the named group? Does this merely invite repression? Does group coherency really matter?*
> - *Can anonymity help mitigate state repression? Can it prevent our attacks from being recuperated into the Spectacle? Can it mean the negation of political identities and an assertion of an individualism that evades subjectivity?*
> - *Can guerrilla warfare truly be separated from vanguardism, specialization, and formalism? Is the anarchist guerrilla a totally different breed?*
>
> —**Introduction,** *Letter to the Anarchist Galaxy*

Indecisiveness seems to be the central concern of anarchism (insurrectionary and otherwise) these days. After years of unprecedented notoriety (and the mainstreaming within revolutionary left discourses of more attack based conceptions of revolutionary activism) the seemingly boundless enthusiasm for taking on violence as a project, building

barricades and smashing windows has ebbed and we are mostly left with questions about what the insurrection is or if it really was the best idea in the first place. The current impasse regarding revolutionary activism (or at least activism predicated on radical politics rather than the more vaguely defined politics of movements based around singular issues) has resulted in a lack of new discourses and a turning backwards to more established activism. Aside from the question of so-called "revolutionary activism" is the wider question of the relationship between the concept of activism and the concept of "revolution" are, or whether there is any connection to be found at all. This question occupies much of the sorry state of contemporary anarchist discourse, a discourse populated more by half thought through symbolic platitudes of strategies, loosely defined, from the past and from other parts of the world, than a discussion of the harsh realities, dim futures and present dynamics of the spaces that we reside within. Maybe this is the best that we could expect at this moment, a moment where many of us have either burned out and dropped out, fallen prey to trauma and addiction or come to abandon activity or the possibility of activity at all. Maybe this is the best we can hope for a generation that was weened on the often repeated "truisms" of the activist milieu, only to have many of us abandon the symbolic engagements, symbolic narrative of symbolic enemies, a form of speech typified by the attempt to make speech and expression rise to a point of primacy, at the cost of sober material attempts at analysis. Further, maybe it is the time for the abandonment of this history, of this lineage; maybe it is the time to complete this break from the activist milieu and the frameworks that come along with this space, and to begin to construct the project yet again. For, it has become clear, that the best that we were able to achieve, for all the press attention and destruction, was nothing but a form of militant activism, jumping from city to city, planned confrontation to planned confrontation, from broken window to broken window.

As a formation our frustration, often made physical in the pages of this journal, is less with the necessity to abandon that which we had come

from, and more with the repetition of the same platitudes by the same partisans of activism, just with a new generation of those driven by an underlying desire to deal a death blow to the current order, for however we define this. Part and parcel of this return is the recuperation of newer forms of activism within the milieu of class oriented anarchism/communism. While the miasmic alphabet soup of moribund dinosaurs seems to have staying power that more dynamic organizations lack (look at the longevity of ISO versus the rapid rise and fall of ELF or SHAC), this has never correlated to particular successes (accomplishments by the more organized left are largely limited to arguments about the Russian Revolution or the Spanish Civil War). Instead we are left with the fossilized remains of the early 1900s reiterating the same tactics and debates about efficiency that have failed to deliver any substantive change to our lives for the past 100 years in the messianic hope that they will somehow work this time if the ritual is only altered just a touch. As opposed to fundamentally rethinking the rules of engagement, the terms of engagement and the categories that these terms are thought, we are once again locked in a debate about a mythological future that may magically emerge if we only replicate the right strategy, thought through within the walls of activist apartments and coffee shops.

Exacerbating this state of affairs is that many veterans of the past years are seeing the efficacy of our collective tactics for the past decade and have opted out of those tactics because the cost/benefit analysis of direction action is overwhelmingly tilted towards incarceration with minimal gains for "the movement." This condition is made worse through the collapse of trust within those circles, a dynamic set off by infighting, burn out, trauma and frustration, leaving many of us in situations where, even when conditions may be present to attempt an intervention, we are beset by enemies, many of which wear the typical well-meaning liberal attire of the traditional activist. Many are caught in a situation in which they, not having divested thoroughly from the perceived moral injunction to act all the time against "injustices", are left vulnerable and unable to discuss

their past experiences for fear of being thought to be transgressive, too dangerous, or being put at risk of being informed upon. This has meant that not only are many of us lost and alone, cut off from our former networks of trust, but also that we are living examples of a history that is quickly being lost from memory, complete with the memory of our failures.

It is impossible in any situation to attempt to posit the answer to this question, to the questions that have arisen through our defeat, through our failures, a failure that many of us live the remnants of every day still in our constant sense of being disjointed from the world. To posit an answer to the mythological "way forward" for the conceptually defined "movement" is not only to come to embrace the categories of assumed unity and symbolic engagements but also to replicate the context of symbolic engagements within conceptually equivalent moments divorces from their temporal specificity; it is to replicate the same categories that generated activism to begin with. Our purpose here is not to provide answers, answers cannot be provided except through replicating the same frameworks that lead us to this current moment. Our purpose is to only ask questions.

NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT

By William Haver

Tom Nomad has asked me to think about the difference between strategy (as a project that is unavoidably distracted by hypothetical pasts and futures) and tactics (as a necessary attention to the immediacy of the present). More precisely, Tom has asked me to think about *how* we think about the difference between strategy and tactics; that is, he has asked me to think philosophically about a difference that is, among much else, itself a radical philosophical difference. Strategic thinking is obsessed by a causality in which the present as such is no more than a more or less unfortunate effect of the past, a continuation of the past as that which determines the entire range of possibility for all futures: the strategist dreams of a world without surprises. Conversely, the future is the object of planning and projects; thus, in strategic thinking, the future is merely a continuation of the present; the present is nothing but the future's past. For the strategist, then, the present is nothing in itself; it is merely the ungraspable and somehow ineffable transition from what is called the past to what is called the future. The tactician, on the other hand, knows it is fatal to be distracted by past or future. More, the tactician knows the present ṅot as a continuous passage from past to future, but as radical contingency. The "present" in its very presence is the essential possibility

of difference. Tactics calls for an experience of the present entirely other than the strategist's knowledge of the present. Tactics calls for a knowledge that does not displace the strategist's knowledge, but that is nevertheless another knowledge, another experience of knowing, another experience of experience.

And yet, tactical thinking runs the risk—perhaps unavoidable, to be sure—of lapsing into strategy. Tactical thinking risks complicity with strategic thinking at the level of those presuppositions that allow it to make sense at all. That is to say, tactical thinking sometimes makes the same assumptions about the nature of time and space as does strategic thinking; in doing so, it cannot but be seduced by strategy, it cannot but find itself thinking strategically. The strategist cannot but think of a "situation" in relation to the big picture, the whole, from a god's-eye view; in strategy, a situation can only make sense when considered from the perspective of the totality. It is, after all, precisely that relation that determines a strategy. The tactician, of course, does not enjoy the luxury of such transcendence, and must remain focused on the specificity of a given situation. Here, then, the difference between strategy and tactics is quite clear.

Strategists and tacticians alike orient themselves to a situation first of all by means of reference to temporal and spatial coordinates. We say that something happens *at* a certain place, *at* a certain time, *on* a certain date; situations are first of all situated *in* time and space. This is of course quite necessary; without reference to temporal and spatial coordinates, neither strategy nor tactics would make any sense at all. But notice that these apparently innocent locatives—"at," "in," "where," "when," and all the rest—bear with them the philosophical assumption (without which they would not make any sense at all) that time and space exist anterior to any situation whatever, prior to all happening, all experience, all difference, all becoming. This presumptive priority of time and space necessarily means that the difference between past, present, and future precedes any happening that would in fact actualize the very difference between past,

present, and future, the difference that is the very possibility of time (and space). *It is precisely because time and space are supposed to be always already "there" (a priori) that "time" and "space" are nothing but abstractions.* Time, then, is nothing but the abstractions of clock and calendar; place becomes nothing but location, and thus there can be no empirical experience of time and space—except the experience of abstraction. Thus, the present as well becomes nothing but abstraction, a mere point in an infinite series, just like every other point in past and future. There could therefore be no empirical experience of time and space as difference, there therefore could be no sense of "here, now, this."

So, we might phrase our problem in the apparently naïve terms of a question: is there a specifically tactical sense of time and space? Even more naively: might there even be a specifically anarchist sense of time and space, a sense that would be irreducible to the abstract concepts of time and space? Might there be a specifically tactical (or even anarchist) experience of the fact that there is time, the fact that there is space? Admittedly, these questions are speculative, but it seems to me that our adventure depends upon such speculations.

To the extent that we think strategically, we can only make sense of a situation (of whatever sort, and however conceived) in relation to totality, the big picture in which, and according to which, everything is obliged to make sense. But in order to make strategic sense of a situation, we necessarily must forget everything that is specific to the unique situation. More, we must of necessity exclude all the singularities of a situation (e.g., *these* bodies, rather than merely "bodies" in their generality) as essentially "irrational." In other words, all the empirical singularities of the "present" must be excluded—even denounced—in order for strategic thinking to constitute itself as the sole possibility for sense and knowledge. Our question becomes one of how we think about the empirical singularities of the tactical situation, one of how we think about singularity without simply relegating singularity to the realm of the unthinkable. I will approach this question first rather formally by way of a question of numbers; second,

by way of the question of the first person pronoun; and then return to questions of time, space, and the presence of the present.

Consider the contradictions of the concept of the number "1." We are most familiar with "1" as the first in the series of whole integers. As such, it is a "numbering number," that is, a number we use for counting. So familiar are we with this usage that it seems to be self-evident; yet that apparent self-evidence distracts us from some of the complications of the concept. Philosophers have long contemplated the relation (if relation there be) between 0 and 1, between non-being and being; typically, they have turned to theology to account for the movement from non-being to being as accomplished by divine fiat: it is merely a miracle. But the more interesting and relevant difficulty for us is the relation between 1 and 2, the relation between 1 and more-than-1, *because there is nothing in the concept of "1" that requires a concept of "more-than-1"*. (After all, we learned that "1+1=2" because it was simply asserted to be true; we can no more say why that is so today than when we learned to repeat the assertion as children.) And yet it is in the relation between 1 and more-than-1 that the entire possibility for abstraction, sense, and what counts as rationality lies. The only thing mathematics cannot account for is the possibility of mathematics, the possibility of what counts for mathematics as reason.

So, yes, the number "1" functions as the first in the series of whole integers, and can thereby be used for counting. But there are two other senses of "1" in which 1 is not a numbering number because it does not bring with it the concept of "number." In these other senses of "1," 1 is the number that is also the limit of number, abstraction, and rationality: "1" not only designates a series, but the impossibility of a series: "1, 1, 1, 1, . . ." is not counting, not a series, nor can it ever be a set. From the perspective of arithmetic, "1, 1, 1, 1, . . ." is merely an absurdity where "1" is not a number at all. In this case, "1" designates singularity, that which is always an *exception* to seriality or totality as such. (Dialectical

philosophers beware: exception is not negation.) Singularity is that which cannot be translated into abstraction (including that abstraction which is the *concept* of singularity); it is that which resists translation absolutely. In this sense 1 expresses no partitive relation (as in "one *of* those," for example), 1 can never be simply half of 2, or part of "more-than-1." One can never say what singularity "is"; therefore, there can be no examples of singularity. Singularity is not *what* it is, but *that* it is. For all these reasons, singularity is said to be absurd or irrational. Which is not to say that singularity does not exist; it is simply to say that empirical singularity is that which cannot be subsumed within the logic that is the condition of possibility for strategic thinking.

There is another sense of "1" that introduces an interesting contradiction. If "1" is at once numbering number and a designation of the singularity that cannot be subsumed within the logic of arithmetic, it is also the designation of the One, the One-All, the indivisible. The indivisible One-All is not the agglutinative sum of its parts (because $1+1+1+1...$ only ever $= 1+1+1+1...$), but is *identical* to the innumerable singularities that are exceptions to itself. This contradiction, this tautology, is nonsense for any philosopher trained in strategic thinking. And certainly, this formulation constitutes a limit for what most of us have been trained to regard as "thinkable." But what if, instead of rejecting the formulation as absurd nonsense (thus affirming our own training in the making of sense as the exclusion of everything else that might count as thinking), we take this formulation to be a call for another experience and practice of thinking? What might this logic of the contradictory identity of the One-All and the innumerable singularities that are exceptions to the One-All help us to think? What is the "use-value" of this challenge? Just, what if?

For most of us, most of the time, nothing seems more certain than the sense that we know what we are saying when we use the first person pronoun, "I." After all, what could be more certain, less open to question, than the self-evidence of my existence as identical to itself? If my

autoaffectivity, my sense that I am certain I exist, does not count as irrefutable fact, then there are no such things as facts, because—tautologically—my presence to myself is my only certainty. And yet, of course, 400 years of continental European philosophy, psychology, and psychoanalysis have taught us to regard such naïve empiricism with skepticism (not to mention the occasional supercilious sneer). I think we should hold fast to our empirical tautological autoaffectivity, if not to the naiveté of a certain version of empiricism. Why?

First, let us note that much of the skepticism regarding my certainty that I exist, and that I am identical to myself, stems from a demand that I *prove* that I exist, and that I prove that I exist according to a certain conception of what would constitute "proof." Let us admit straightaway that there can be no logical proof for the existence of the self. But let us also note the curious character of this demand for proof. First of all, it demands that the "I" become an object of knowledge *for itself*, and that therefore the proposition that I exist is such that it can either be proved or disproved. The "I" is thereby, willy-nilly, taken to be *nothing but* an object of rational knowledge. It becomes an object of rational knowledge through reflection, that is, rational consciousness becoming conscious of itself as such, by thinking thinking thinking itself. Such objectification of the self for itself is an act of abstraction; the "I" is thereby reduced to being *nothing but* the capacity for abstraction, for the rationality that it presumptively is. And this is so even when the "I" is said to be constituted both in and as recollection of, and reflection upon its past. Further, note that both as that object which can be known, and as the subject who knows, the "I" is regarded as essentially passive. As subject, the "I" is a purely receptive consciousness, one that plays no part in the constitution of that of which it is conscious. Indeed, all perception, all cognition and understanding, is purely receptive: the "I," construed as the subject that knows itself, never acts, and perception, cognition, and knowing can therefore be conceived therefore as contemplation. As object, as that which is to be perceived, (re)cognized, and understood, the "I" is

merely inert; it merely exists in order to verify the essential rationality of the knowing subject. Even if I perceive my self to be "irrational," the very perception of my self as "irrational" nevertheless simply reasserts the mastery of the rational "I." Insofar as the reflective self can only be rational, the "I" can never in fact be conceived as empirical singularity.

Second, thinking about the "I" and what it designates most often begins and ends with the question of its quiddity, its "whatness": *what* is the self? The rarely examined presupposition of this question is that "the self" designated by the "I" is a "what," possessed of qualities and characteristics that can be predicated of "the self," rendering selves classifiable, and thereby objects for knowledge and the understanding. The "I" is always summoned to identify itself in terms of its presumptive quiddity; thereby, "the self" becomes the object of policing; "the self" in this sense has always been the object of profiling and control, the object of every philosopher-cop's mastery.

What if, however, the "I" and "the self" which is its presumptive referent are something quite other than the object of the philosopher-cop's B&D fantasies? What if, that is to say, the "I" refers to something quite other than the epistemological object of an essentially passive reflection and contemplation, something quite other than a certain "whatness" that is possessed of attributes that renders selves classifiable and subject to control? What if "I"="1"? What if at least certain deployments of the first person pronoun simply mark the event of empirical singularity, not the quiddity of a thing, but a presence, an autoaffectivity irreducible to reflection and knowledge? How would we think about the "I" then, in the mode of speculation, rather than that of the production of knowledge? Let us note in passing that this "I" of our speculations does not render the subjectivity of the self which is produced as both object and subject of knowledge either nonexistent or false. We simply pay attention to that which had to be ignored, or dismissed as irrelevant, or even disavowed, in order to reduce the singularity of the "I" to abstract rationality; we ourselves need not disavow rationality in some celebratory irrationalism

in order to think about what of empirical singularity necessarily exceeds a particular version of Reason.

Let us return to the idiosyncratic "1" of our perverse philosophy of arithmetic in order to pursue the speculative proposition that "I"="1." We are very well aware—painfully aware—how the "I" can function as the "1" *qua* numbering number; we all know too well the effects of being counted in one census or another in order to be subsumed within a "population." That version of the "I" *qua* "1" needs no further attention here. But the "I" that at once designates singularity and the One-All does. In my empirical singularity I am autonomous—literally, a law unto myself. This autonomy does not concern the will or willfulness of an ego, but the fact that my singular existence cannot be deduced from anything else; nothing leads the world to predict my existence. Certainly, I am the result of certain biological affective processes, but all one can deduce from those processes is the birth of *a* child, not the empirical existence of *this* body, *this* mind. In this sense, the "I," my "I," is "cause of itself" (*causa sui*, as theologians say of one or another god). In this case, all that can be said of the "I" is that it is identical to itself, a tautology that marks the limit of the possibility of philosophy. This means that the singular "I" cannot be said to share any characteristics or qualities with other entities; singularities cannot as such be gathered together to form a population. Thus, the "I" always designates not an example, but an exception to the world conceived as (rational) totality. This constitutes the autoaffectivity of empirical singularities, a sense of self that is not the logical conclusion of consciousness reflecting on itself. Neither, therefore, can it be conceived in any psychological reductionism as merely narcissistic ego.

A singularity is *that* it is, rather than *what* it is, and as such is identical to itself. Yet at the same time, we can only think about singularities in terms of not being what they are not. That is, we can only think about singularity as exception, or anomaly, or (in the strong sense of the term) idiosyncrasy: singularity can only be conceived of as that which it is *not*. It is *not*, in fact, all the other innumerable singularities whatever. The "I"

is that which is without-relation—but that being-without-relation is itself precisely a *relation*. The relation to all other innumerable empirical singularities is in fact this being-without-relation that is relation, and it is this relation of being-without-relation among all empirical singularities that in fact constitutes the One-All. The One-All can only be conceived, then, as difference from itself, an incessant becoming other than "itself," which is to say that the One-All is dynamic becoming: it is in perpetual flux. The One-All has no existence before, after, above, or below its articulation in and as innumerable empirical singularities. Conversely, empirical singularities exist *only* as exceptional articulations of the One-All. The One-All (something like "the world") is the necessary presupposition of empirical singularity (something like the "I"); conversely, the world necessarily presupposes the singularity of innumerable "I"s. This brings us to an interesting tautology: everything causes everything. The "I" then emerges from the mutual affectivity of all innumerable empirical singularities. (To avoid confusion here, let me say I define "affectivity" as the power to affect—physically, intellectually, emotionally, in any manner whatever—and to be affected by all other singularities, in other words, "everything.") In the mutual affectivity of innumerable singularities, I emerge from the world in a movement of radical separation that in fact constitutes the world as such. There are two important consequences here: first, we must acknowledge that the "I" is in no respect, and certainly not essentially, passive; second, that singularities and the One-All are temporal, historical phenomena. The "I" is neither passive nor transcendent.

The classic, but still typical philosophical conception of perception, cognition, understanding, and learning is a thoroughly pedagogical model in which what is perceived by the senses, (re)cognized, understood, and learned is essentially inert; the senses simply download the world for knowledge. Concomitantly, the "I" that perceives, (re)cognizes, understands, and learns is a pure, passive receptivity that somehow exists outside the world that is learned. But for the "I" that emerges in the mutual affectivity of innumerable singularities, however, perception,

cognition, understanding, and learning are the work of an active intuition of the world, all acts of appropriation. Clearly, for example, there is nothing whatever that is passive about learning to walk, swim, ride a bicycle, or speak a language. In learning to swim, for example, we appropriate the water as habitus for our bodies, but we are also appropriated by the water, such that we exist in synergy with the water. When we learn to speak a language, we take the language for our own, but at the same time we are appropriated by the language, we are spoken by the language. We do not merely see, hear, taste, smell, or touch something: these are all acts of appropriation, and in those acts of appropriation, we ourselves are appropriated. Indeed, all of these innumerable acts of appropriating and being appropriated (i.e., mutual affectivity) constitute the "I"; there is no I, no subject, that either precedes or survives this general circulation of the affects: the empirical singularity of the "I" exists only in this mutuality of appropriation. Further, it is in this process alone that the world, the One-All, is constituted.

The philosopher's tendency has most often been to speak of the "I," a sense of self, and the subject constituted in reflection upon the self, *as if* both the "I" and the One-All were stable entities, possessed of an unchanging essence, *essentially* outside of historical becoming, "in" time and space, but in fact essentially atemporal. But it is precisely the essentially temporal nature of the general circulation of the affects that articulates singularities. It is because the articulation of singularities transpires in and as becoming that singularities are in fact *historical* singularities. That is, what is singular—the empirical—is caught up in the *irreversibility* of becoming: the term "historical" here simply indicates that irreversibility. At this point, the sense of our characterization of the One-All as constituted in the articulation of empirical singularities that are exceptions to the One-All becomes clear: the One-All is simply the irreversible—historical—metamorphosis of innumerable singularities (or the self-organization of entities in states far from equilibrium, what we nickname "life"). Here it little matters whether one characterizes this

process as entropy, decay, "death," or as energetic growth or "life." The point is that it orients all singularities as such toward a radical difference from the present; indeed, singularity is that orientation.

Two points bear emphasis here. First, the presentation so far may perhaps have reinforced the impression that the affectivity of mutual appropriations and the articulation of singularities occurs "in" time and space, as if time and space were empty abstractions that somehow antedate all existence. On the contrary, the articulation of singularities in the interactions of appropriation is the original "experience" of time-and-space. (This "experience" is of course by no means limited to the human, nor even to the animate; least of all is it merely—or even essentially—a matter of what is called subjective consciousness.) In other words, abstractions of clock, calendar, and spatial grids are neither the possibility nor measure of the experience of time; they are simply abstractions, derived from the mechanics of classical physics, that purport to render the experience of time-and-space rational. "Time-and-space" could never be conceptualized without the original experience of becoming-singular, that is, the original experience of an orientation to the radical difference of futurity.

Second, if the One-All is simply the irreversibility of metamorphosis and change of innumerable exceptional singularities, that is, if the One-All is essentially historical, then it must be the case that no "laws of nature" are themselves immutable, nor are they necessarily universal. The aspiration to discover and understand the eternal and universal laws of nature (or, the "mind of God") is a specifically theological ambition. It is mere faith that persuades us that nature and the universe are constituted according to principles that transcend all becoming and all history. The most that can be claimed (and it is a necessary and important claim, not to be simply dismissed) is that what we call the "laws of nature" are simply the most persuasive formulation of our understanding, for us, here and now, of certain apparently regular phenomena. It is not simply a matter of acknowledging

our own historical limits, but of realizing that the One-All is more radically historical than we imagine ourselves to be. With all this in mind, let us return to our questions of presence and the present, and of what this might imply for our thinking about tactics.

We are all familiar, of course, with a concept of time as a presumptively infinite continuity punctuated at equal intervals by calculable discontinuities (seconds, minutes . . .millenia, etc.). We all know, and have to live much of our lives according to, the abstract metronomic precision of the clocks and calendars that are the measure of this continuity of discontinuities. We also know, of course, that even though our lives are in large part regulated by clock and calendar, no entity has actually experienced "time" in this way, except as the infinite repetition of an unchanging series that is without effective difference. But if "time" is nothing but an infinite continuity of discontinuities, an infinite repetition of the Same, then we could never have any sense of the irreversibility of time (that is, "time" *as* irreversibility), we could never distinguish between past, present, and future. So, what is it that makes it possible to make that differentiation, to have a sense *that there* is "time"?

We can only have a sense of the effective difference between past, present, and future if there is that which interrupts the infinite boredom of the unchanging series of discontinuities; there must be that which *exceeds* the series, and makes it possible. In others words, there must be a singularity, an originality in the strong sense of the term, that makes a sense of time possible. That singularity (original in that at all points it provokes—and thus is the origin of—time) is the present. Not unlike "1" in our perverse philosophy of arithmetic, the present occupies its place in a series, but is also an exception to the series that makes the series possible. The present is that singularity that is at once the possibility and limit of "time." The present, which is "in" time, is also something other than "time"; the present possesses breadth, and thus is spatial as the *limit* of time. The present is at all times the original singularity that is the genesis

of time altogether: the present is the eternal Big Bang, as it were. The present is the One-All of all singular presents, a temporality that always radically exceeds itself.

If all this is so, it is because there is no empirical self-evident presence outside of the present. The past has no presence except in its effects and recollection in the present; the future has no presence save in its anticipation in the present. The past is only ever the past-in-the-present, the future is only ever the future-in-the-present. Like that singularity designated by the "I," the present, *as* singularity, we take to be self-evident; we assume that in one way or another, our experience of "now" is certain, as undoubtedly certain as our experience of "I," or of "here." But also like that singularity designated by the "I," the present in its very presence is taken to be ungraspable, even ineffable, something that escapes epistemological objectivity for consciousness, something that exceeds its abstraction. But as we have seen with the "I," the presence of the present is ungraspable or ineffable only from the perspective of a knowing that insists that abstraction is the only possibility of knowledge, and that therefore any empirical experience of the "I," the "now," or "here"—which is to say, of the present in its presence—is either unknowable or merely quasi-mystical mumbo jumbo. Our speculation, of course, is that the present is graspable, that it is quite effable indeed, *but only on condition that it is known as something other than rational abstraction on the part of subjects defined precisely by their capacity for rationality and abstraction.* There are any number of disciplines that bring us to an experience and a knowledge (whether conscious or not makes little difference) of the present in its presence. Practices of "meditation" in Zen Buddhism, for example, are disciplines of coming to an experience of the empirical present in its radical originality and singularity. (There are, of course, many other quite different examples: I leave a catalogue of such practices to such others as may be interested.)

Of course, there is certainly nothing extraordinary about such experience and knowledge; indeed, that experience and knowledge is the

condition of all existence. It's simply that we don't often (if ever) reflect that we experience and know the singular, original presence of the present. If we had no such knowledge, we could not possibly survive; indeed, all that lives must experience and know this present as the rupture that is at once the possibility and limit of our experience of time. Several of the sciences, of course, will explain such behaviors with references to instinct, or DNA coding, or conditioning, or chemical triggers, or various concepts of the neurosciences. Perhaps such references are all accurate (perhaps). But they are quite beside the point for our purposes, because they do not take up the question of the experience of instinct, or the rush of adrenalin as the effect of a certain experience of singularity, and so forth. What does matter for us, is that we are talking about experiences of the present as experiences of radical contingency.

It is at this point, I hope, that the pertinence of all this to the question of tactics becomes clear, for if there is one thing that distinguishes tactics from strategy, it is that strategists haven't a clue how either to conceptualize or to negotiate the present as radical contingency. For strategists, contingency can be nothing more than accidental tragedy; but tactics emerge from the essential contingency at the heart of the immediate situation, from the presence of the present. Dogs may not be able to read a map, but they are capable of following all the contingencies of the olfactory signals that constitute a "trail"; few birds have advanced degrees in geology, but they take to the sky when an earthquake is still beyond the ken of the seismologist. Those beings we call animals make lousy strategists, but tacticians can learn much from their ability to negotiate that radical contingency we call the present. Again, this is not to displace or disavow the knowledge of the cartographer or the geologist; it is to say that in the immediate presence of a situation, such knowledge too easily becomes impediment. Just try reviewing the history of automotive engineering the next time your car goes into a skid, and see how much that helps.

The best tactician is something of a Zen guerilla, aware of the situation as something other than a temporal, spatial location, because the tactician

is open to contingency as the advent of a futurity that is completely unexpected, completely inexplicable according to existing protocols of understand; the tactician is open to—indeed, affirms—futurity as radical difference, a difference so complete that it is incomprehensible to any version of the present as extension of the past; the tactician affirms the presence of the present as the rupture that at once exceeds and constitutes the One-All. Such an affirmation can only be experienced as the violence of singularities in their mutual appropriation. Tactics is the discipline of learning how to affirm the present as a becoming oriented toward a futurity it will not be for us to know; tactics is the art of making it happen.

ON EXISTENTIAL CRISIS, THE COLLAPSE OF DOCTRINE AND THE EMBRACING OF IMPASSES

Though this may be an odd place to begin an article about the current existential crisis that is sweeping the anarchist milieu, it is fitting none-the-less. Rather than beginning with a discussion of the fall of Occupy, the increasing irrelevance of anarchists in most of the recent anti-police activity in the United States and the general collapse of concentrations that seemed to be capable of driving the inertia forward, rather, we will be starting this discussion with a night in 2012, the collapse of the Romney campaign, and the meltdown that followed. Almost as quickly as the election results began to come in on November 6, 2012 stories began to be written about the impending implosion that was beginning to build up within the heart of the Republican Party, an implosion that has led to many of the dynamics that we are now seeing in electoral politics. Speculation began months before with the creation of a website called Unskewed Polls, which attempted to make the claim that political polling

was skewed in the favor of Democrats, and which would begin to "un-skew" polls, or taking polls which heavily overestimated the percentage of voters that were Republican in political tendency. This lead to two dynamics being constructed. The first, which is entirely unsurprising, is that Romney all of sudden seemed to be winning the election, at least in the view of those who relied on this site for their election news. The other is that this approach, by virtue of being undertaken by a well known Republican strategist, Frank Luntz, began to shape the narrative around the election for a certain group of possible voters, namely voters who derived their news from the echo chamber of talk radio, Fox News, a collection of websites and News Corp dominated newspapers.

What began as clearly a propaganda experiment in the height of an election began to play a role in the construction of a worldview, one that had already been in development since the 1990s. This worldview, one held by a subset of Republican stalwarts, perceives the world in a certain way, operates within a certain interpretation of events that is repeated between media outlets, and which contains a clear a comprehensive narrative of events within a reactionary approach to world events. On its own this would not be newsworthy, let alone the place to begin a discussion of the emerging existential and strategic crisis within the anarchist milieu, but this is only part of this story. What occurred from this point, as Summer merged into Fall, was that this propaganda campaign came to influence the propagandists themselves, and came to shape an approach to electoral strategy that was, at its core, separated from the dynamics on the ground. As conservative news outlets started to report these polling results as reflective of the actual situation on the ground, the campaign strategists themselves began to believe the polling information as well, and began to shape their electoral strategy around these polling results. A narrative had constructed itself, borne out of decades of Republican complaints about the "liberal media" that the repeated information being dispersed by any number of other outlets could not be relied upon, that the only source of information that was reliable was the information that

they were generated on their own. This closed the doctrinal loop, constructed a narrative that was built purely on self-replicating rhetorical assumptions, and one that had to be trusted in an almost religious way, otherwise one would have to come to terms with the failure of doctrine to yield true narratives.

In the days before the election political commentators started to ask questions about Romney campaign strategy, and why they were focusing on campaigning in states that most polls showed them far behind in. Their only response was that they possessed information about polls that rationalized that strategy. As the day of the election progressed an odd dynamic began to construct itself; those within the Romney campaign were absolutely confident in victory, while all other information, including exit polls told a very different story. That night, as the results were almost finished being tallied Karl Rove, chief strategist for the Bush Administration had what could only be called a meltdown live on Fox News; the anchors had called Ohio for Obama, at a point that it was statistically impossible for Romney to get enough votes to win the state, and Rove lost it, claiming that the election results were wrong, and almost storming off the set. Romney came to Boston that night without even having written a concession speech. What followed was a series of reports about a crisis within the core of the Republican establishment. It was not just that they had lost an election that they were certain they were going to win. Rather, with this loss all sources of information, the same sources that constructed the core of this worldview, were shown to have provided incorrect and fallacious information. It is at this point that a strategic loss became the basis for a wider philosophical collapse, one that threatened to destroy the entirety of the Republican establishment, and one that has set the stage for the implosion of any form of rationality within our current political situation, one widely characterized by Twitter battles and attempts to make rhetorical claims more extreme and fascist than the next candidate.

Though many of us will be quick to hurl scorn and accusations of

stupidity at those that were seemingly taken by this vision, and the implosion that was caused by its collapse, there is more to be taken from this example that simplistic reaction to the context of this collapse, an increasingly terrifying fascist bent among Republican Party adherents. Rather, there are a couple dynamics latent within this scenario that require a more careful analysis. Firstly, what this situation demonstrates is less a scenario of delusion, but rather an interesting illustration of something that can only be characterized as a theological dynamic. Within theological dynamics a fascinating inversion occurs; rather than making sense of things, and having this construction of a notion of sense begin to fuse into a narrative, the narrative begins to shape the things themselves. In other words, with the departure of the contextualization of events from a position of theological metaphysics the events that occur begin to take on a meaning that exceeds the contextualization of events, and begins to become an expression of a wider metaphysical context. This is latent, to some degree or another, in all forms of thought, but within the theological context this inversion begins to frame the very activities themselves, a dynamic that we can witness in the contemporary American Christian obsession with pointing to events as a harbinger of the "end of the world". In this scenario the adherence to the idea of non-minoritarian status that upholds much of the conservative narrative came to express itself in specific actions that reinforced the narrative, constructing a closed loop that only collapsed within a quantitative metric, a vote count. Secondly, in the implosion of the operational worldview that motivated this collapse and descent into internecine warfare, the fundamental question was never asked, the question of whether the failure of the narrative lies in the very construction of worldview, rather than in the immediate aesthetic variables of specific worldviews. In other words, as quickly as the collapse occurred the search was already underway for another worldview that could replace the former context. It is this tendency toward replacement, this tendency to insist quietly on the construction of worldview itself, that we will focus our attention on primarily here. The crisis of political

form, in this context, is less about the collapse of worldview, and more about the conflict that emerges in the space generated by this collapse around the question of in what form political unity is attempted to be constructed once again. Within this process of the tendency to re-establish worldview, and to understand the political through the injunction to establish clear, coherent worldviews that supposedly express the totality of moments and ground actions in a narrative of legitimacy, the process moves from the collapse of worldview, this opening of conceptual and material possibilities, into a process through which the material is framed entirely through the lens of conceptual terrain within the context of re-established worldview. Though this is a necessity within any statist framework of thought, there always must be a worldview within a context fundamentally centered around narratives of life as such, this is a possibility that can be escaped outside of this context. But, for as clear as this line of flight may be, it is this grasping to the dynamics of worldview, and the implosions that accompany the failure of worldview to express the world itself, that lies at the core of the malaise that has currently gripped the anarchist milieu.

To write this phenomena off as simply the result of a significant number of people being taken by media propaganda is not only to miss the importance of this specific moment in history, and how it led to the incoherent ranting that passes for mainstream politics today, it is also to miss the very structure of worldview, and the ways that worldview comes to inform much of what we term politics. Within this example the operative moment was not just the moment of deception gone awry, but more the moment in which the future promised through this deception became unfulfilled. It is in this concept of the abortive future that we can come to see the fundamental structure of the concept of worldview itself. In this example the collapse of the future, in this case the future without a second Obama term, came to collapse the very structure of the political framework that this future vision was based on. Rather than, in military thought for example, the strategic doctrine collapses, causing some

ideas to be rethought, but the fundamental structure of the ontology of the state in tact, this moment caused a collapse of the entire Republican ethos. Granted, this collapse had been coming for some years, ever since the entire politics of the Republican Party became about raising the corpse of Reagan, and the mythology built about that age, but the final implosion and the current power crisis that embroils the organization as a whole began to gain momentum with the implosion of this concept of the future.

It is in this notion of the abortive future that we can begin to gain a glimpse into the outlines of worldview, and how this framework of thought structures much of what we now understand to be politics, as well as forms the basis of the current crisis within the anarchist milieu. In the construction of worldview the past, present and future collapse into a form of vision without any contour, a completely flat understanding of time and space, in which every moment exists on a continuum between past and future, and in which this continuum is determined through the outlines of conceptual speculations. In this phenomena the temporality of time and space cease to matter in their particular features, in their dynamic ontologies, and begin to function as nothing other than a representation, a quantity of representability expressed through objects and activity. The structure of value comes to exist through a transcendental understanding, a metaphysics of conceptual thought, that comes to function as explanation of past events, as expressed in the present, and as guide for the future. We can clearly see this sort of understanding play itself out in the mind of someone like Alex Jones, who within an hour of any catastrophe will proclaim that it is a false flag, and already have had the time to produce a video about it. We can also see this in millenarian Christian organizations, who are constantly attempting to put a date on the "end of the world" always to be shown to be incorrect, leaving them to either attempt some sort of outlandish explanation or to be left with a very thinned group of followers. But, for as much as we can see this in constellations of assumption that we find absurd, this same structure

also lies at the core of primitivism, or of the revolutionary mass movement tendency as a whole, which is content with repeating tactics over and over again based on some loose understanding of the power of the "working class".

The problem here cannot be simply written off as a collapse of doctrine, or as a problem of the indeterminacy of the so-called "post-left", as many of our more traditional accomplices would like to think it. Rather, to understand the dynamics at play here we have to think this problem as a dual move, and a profoundly temporal problem within this dual move. Within the initial move we have some material moment that causes the implosion of a conceptual framework, and within this opens space up within thought to construct a multiplicity of possible forms of making sense. This is less about the failure of worldviews, or something like this, and more about the confrontation between the particularity of the unique moment in history[1]. It is in this confrontation, as in all confrontation, or all activity for that matter, that the possibility of anything exists. Without this, if the world were actually defined by this fusion of all temporality, this atemporality, of theory, nothing could occur, and everything would be the repetition of some transcendental meaning. On the other hand, and this is where the confrontation that has led to the current incoherence within political discourse lies, there seems to always be an attempt, almost an injunction, to try to impose new meanings of things, to attempt to impose a new concept of sense once again, and to structure discourse not around how to make sense of the complexities of the world, but around how to imagine these complexities away within nice, neat transcendental frameworks. In other words, this injunction to always be able to explain the world, to ground action in some sense of certainty,

---

1 For us to think of any action as relevant, and the entire revolutionary concept relies on this notion, we have to assume that the universe is not deterministic, and that actions, activity, in any form generates effects. As such, it therefore follows, that the only way to even begin to construct a category for the moment is to construct a category, as Nishida Kitaro argues, which recognizes the moment as both particular in time and space, and as fundamentally separate from the past that was destroyed in the effects of the action itself, even if the dynamics of past moments construct the dynamics of the present.

attempt to take the possibility unleashed in the crisis in worldview, and to ossify it, to conceptualize it, to pretend that the confrontation never occurred, that it does not necessarily always already occur, and to attempt to make the priestly claim that we can actually make sense of things, even if we were somehow mistaken before. This conflict is not over the dissolution of worldview necessarily, although there are definitely many within our orbits that hold on tightly to dying ideas, but, rather, around the terms of which this possibility will become defined once again, will become eliminated, within a specific conceptual framework.

We are assaulted on all sides by this tendency, a tendency toward absolutism that is largely obscured through the rhetoric that this theological tendency attempts to manifest itself, increasingly so as the theological becomes an increasingly impossible position to maintain. As a simple example, we find this tendency toward certainty lying at the core of contemporary atheism, specifically within the Dawkins/Harris school of thinking. Within this thinking one takes the abandonment of God as the beginning of the advent of other conceptual possibilities, namely one defined by the thinking around science. But, as quickly as this space is declared it is again dominated by a crude form of rationalism, defined by Dawkins concept of selfish rational genetics and Harris' reliance on some concept of absolute reason that will free us from the chains of religion. In this second move they create the seeds of the most disturbing forms of fascism, one defined by the rationality of "thinkers" or the biologism of the scientist. Within our uniquely political, meant in the original sense of the term, sense, we are being attacked on all sides by attempts to take the space generated by the failure of the insurrectionary project in North America. In one instance we find the rise of a new school of pacifism, which deluded by illusions of the revolution in Tahrir Square (which they somehow, in their revisionist history, portray within the context of pacifism) attempt to make some proto-strategic argument about the necessity of nonviolence. Outside of Gelderloos demonstrating the myriad of ways in which this mentality not only guarantees the retreat into symbolism and the survival of the state,

to the point of being encouraged by the state when it is in its own interest, the problem resides much deeper than this. If we understand conflict as some immediate moment, as a conflict within trajectories of activity, and we understand the moment as being relevant at all, then we cannot then think the moment as something that can be defined by, discussed through or limited in the deployment of, some concept of universal, atemporal morality; they attempt to impose a moral absolutism, and then retroactively define all moments through this. In this the partisans of pacifism not only impose activism, a symbolic engagement on symbolic terrain framed within a moral imperative to act, as the only possible option, they begin to approach the very dynamics of policing exemplified by the most insidious of authoritarian regimes, portraying some image of resistance as the limit, and collaborating with the state whenever this vision is violated. But, for as awful as the pacifists are, and always have been, we find a similar dynamic at work in the rise of the tendency to either continue the insurrectionist project, and the retroactive attempt to justify a concept of the necessity of engagement, as well as the rise of the urban guerrilla. Even if we cannot say, nor would any of those involved in this project ever claim that this tendency are collaborators like the pacifists, there is a similar moral logic involved, but one that deploys in a very different direction. The question here does not revolve around means, clearly there is divergence here, but rather these tendencies converge around the almost moral injunction to act, in all moment, with some concept of hope lying on the horizons of this activity. This often reduces the risky action taken by those that are very close to this project in many ways, to the symbolic strike against the material symbols of the enemy, the facades of buildings or the bodies of functionaries, and then to attempt to construct some strategic vision out of this activity. So, the question here is not whether we choose total confrontation or absolute pacifism, which is merely a question of which moral framework, but, rather, how we have found ourselves in a situation in which the only option seems to be to impose some new strategic vision.

Revolutionary Millenarianism

The roots of this almost pathological attempt to grasp for meaning, some meaning that can ground action beyond the sense that one has speculatively made sense of the world, lies not necessarily in the modern revolutionary tendency itself, but rather traces itself back to the rise of Protestantism, and the advent of the printing press. Now, we clearly do not have the time to treat this subject with the care and detail that this deserves, and will likely do so in a future piece. The only aim here is to draw a picture, a speculative framework, in broad strokes. For, as Stirner discusses[2], it is within the Protestant Reformation, a dynamic that could have not been unleashed without the ability to disseminate information through the printed word, that we find the beginnings of the dynamics that eventually led us to the concept of revolution in the modernist age. An important move was made in the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation, one that would lead to any number of concepts of millenarian conflict. In this move the individual became an agent, one that could act, but that could only act in a very specific way; that could only act if guided by divine providence. Within the Catholic context the individual, and political structure, is framed within the concept of arbitrary action, we are all imperfect. For some, the aristorcratic class, this arbitrariness was divinely sanctioned by the Church, and its functionaries, the priests, who alone had access to Truth, in the form of Vatican teaching. With the advent of Protestantism the individual became, in theory, capable of making direct contact with the divine, making the individual a moral agent, but only to the degree that their actions were moral. There are any number of outcomes of this idea, but one of which was the concept of attempting to fuse the concept of action with the concept of morality, with some worldview of action, that would ground action in legitimacy.

---

2   Stirner, Max (1995). *The Ego and Its Own.* Trans Leopold, David. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press

As Schmitt discusses in *The Concept of the Political*[3] this structure of the conceptualization of action generated not only the basis of revolution within the modernist period, but also a very odd conceptualization of politics, as a relationship of force grounded in principles of absolutism. For Schmitt, in liberalism, we see an odd sort of formation construct itself, one that is not only tied to the absolutism of modernist revolutionaries, but also to the Terror and the Red Terror. Within feudal concept of sovereignty the actions of the sovereign were understood to be arbitrary, and as Foucault later elaborates, were based on the concept of the actions of the sovereign against the subject, based in the maintenance of the power dynamic between the sovereign and the subject[4]. With the collapse of monarchism, a dynamic directly related to the Protestant concept of the moral activity of the individual, the concept of action took on a very different tone. Rather then being action that was arbitrary, but sanctioned, action began to be framed within a certain form of moralism, typified by more simplistic readings of Kantianism. Action ceased being the purview of those that cannot actually understand truth, but became framed as the action of moral individuals, or action that existed as more or less an expression of some absolute morality, some concept of theory, of the transcendental. Within this framework not only did the state become something that was at its core framed within the concept of universality, leading to not only the execution of those that violated "truth", but also to the rise of the ubiquituous concept of policing that we currently find ourselves embroiled within, but revolution became framed within the same idea, as a form of salvation, a form of moving away from a false world into a world grounded within a narrative of universal truth, which both grounds the argument for the legitimacy of action as well as the speculative concepts of the future that are then conceptually connected to the notion of conflict and fighting.

3   Schmitt, Carl (1996). *The Concept of the Political*. Trans Schwab, George. Chicago. University of Chicago Press
4   Foucault, Michel (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trand Sheridan, Alan. New York. Penguin Press

We clearly see this same tendency when we attempt to read thinkers like Kropotkin[5] or even Emma Goldman[6], in her worst moments, and definitely in the thinking of the platformists, and even more clearly in Lenin[7]. In all of these works, as opposed to a thinker like Novatorre or Bakunin, we find a retreat to a form of naturalism, an ethics that becomes derived from a concept of the natural, which as we can see in the experiments of the early to middle 20th century always plays out in the worst forms of fascism, where the state is able to define the natural. In these thinkers we find the most odd sort of contradiction, that one the one hand the situation that they are proposing is natural, and if we overlook the arrogance of claiming to understand truth in itself (to understand all possible things in all possible ways), while on the other hand they are proposing that we somehow have come to exist outside of this inherent, natural, true, state. The problem here not only resides in the philosophical problem; if something is true then it cannot have any sort of counterexample, it cannot be untrue, even for a single possible moment, but rather in this attempt to unleash hell, only to define heaven as Earth. The problem here resides not so much in the failure of concepts, if we are to understand concepts as attempts to draw categorical commonalities around particular things in particular moments then concepts will always fail, but in the attempt to take this failure, draw revolution, the physical manifestation of the collapse of worldview, into being, only to define that possibility again within another universal framework.

It is in this worl,dview, the very same worldview that has driven the totality of the modernist revolutionary tendency, that we find the core of a certain millenarianism. In other words, this vision is motivated less by the concept of the failure of former ideas, than it is by the concept that if we act in light of some actual truth, if we only act within the purview

5   Kropotkin, Peter (1995). *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*. Ed Shatz, Marshall. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press

6   Goldman, Emma (1969). *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Mineola. Dover Publications

7   Lenin, Vladimir (1975). *VI Lenin: Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Moscow. Progress Publishers

of absolutism, that we will manifest some sort of heaven on Earth. It is clear that we do not need to explain how this replicates the Christian vision, specifically in its modern American Fundamentalist manifestation, in which practitioners hope that if they take the right action (which not only imply a sort of religious fascism, but also the attempt to bring about the collapse of the environment or to continue the occupation of Palestine) then the end of the material world, the temporal historical world will come, and the transcendental kingdom will prevail. For the anti-theists amongst us, the ones that are left, this vision should seem clearly problematic, but this is not even the issue, that it violates some concept of anti-theism. Rather, the problem resides in how this concept of universality, of "truth", forms the core of the concept of antagonistic action, or the antagonistic posture in itself.

The problem is further deepened when we begin to approach the lines of flight out of this conundrum, in the form of post-structuralism. Though we have our Foucaults and Deluzes, who attempted to think their way out of this problem, to ground action against the state not in the attempt to reimpose absolutism, but in the speculative conceptual analysis of the operational dynamics of the state itself, and formed the core of an actually relevant operational thought, we have seen this tradition compromised not only through the reappropriation of Foucault by field like "management theory" and finance, but also in the eclipsing of these thinkers by the covert influence of a thinker like Lyotard, Badiou or Zizek. In Lyotard, and this is continued in Derrida, we are left with nothing but critique, an idea that is brought to its absolute absurdity with Simon Critchley's proposal that if we only bombard the state with demands then it will collapse. These thinkers take theoretical impossibility of absolute truth to be a conceptual problem, combines this with a purely conceptual idea of the state[8], and defaults into come notion of the conceptual collapse of the state without any clear discussion of the

---

8 ˙ This conceptual understanding clearly becomes clear in the Putinism state's disregard for conceptual consistency within a dynamic operations posture, a dynamic discussed in a series of texts about Ukraine and Syria.

material operational capacity of state functionality. Zizek, on the other hand, completely disregards the importance of the criticism leveraged by the post-structuralists, and attempts to reimpose the concept of common revolutionary vision, exemplified by the Leninist state, but in a form divorced from its concept of truth, which becomes groundless and nothing but either a random preference or some sort of odd Mussolinist[9] claim. Badiou[10], on the other hand, attempts to delegitimze any form of conflict that does not fit his distinctly Maoist version of revolution, which is covertly hidden within some nice rhetoric, as being illegitimate, concealing some sort of assumption of the notion of the Party, and the reimposition of some sort of worldview, which goes unarticulated within his clearer writings.

The post-structuralists failed us. They took an interesting idea, that we could transcend modernism, and the asolutist tendency to ground action in some form of absolute legitimacy, and squandered the opportunity that was laid bare. The clear inheritance of this failure resides in Tiqqun[11], and the Invisible Committee[12], at least in their earlier writings. In these writings we find a retreat to concepts that form the core of an idealistic revolutionary vision. Speckled throughout these writings we find conceptual figures, whether this is the concept of community, or the notion of a certain revolutionary form of life, that attempts to remain without definition, as some sort of sight of indeterminacy, but at the same time imposes a very distinct form of conceptuality. This has constructed not only a certain rhetorical form of expression, also constructs a sort of strategic vision, inspired by the activities in Tarnac, which though more inspirational than most, and framed within an otherwise interesting analysis, is hindered by a certain sort of almost religiosity that adherents

9 Mussolini, Benito (1975). *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*. New York. Gordon Press

10 Badiou. Alain (2012). *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings*. Trans Elliott, Gregory. New York. Verso Press

11 Tiqqun (2010). *Introduction to Civil War*. Trans Smith, Jason and Galloway, Alexander. Los Angeles. Semiotext(e)

12 The Invisible Committee (2009). *The Coming Insurrection*. Los Angeles. Semiotext(e)

express, a form of life if you will. Even here, and in its more loose insurrectionist expressions, we still find an attempt to draw some sort of middle ground between the abandonment of ideas as ways to make sense of the world, as complete expressions of the particularity of dynamics, and the attempt to hold on to ideas as the medium that will deliver us from the torments of the current situation. But, for as these visions have not gone far enough, for as much as they have failed to abandon modernism enough, they do begin to point in a direction, on that is increasingly forming, but of course without its complications and difficulties.

Pessimism and the Abortive Future

Since the collapse of Occupy there has been a gap, something missing, and this cannot be reduced down to a lack of hope. Many of us watched the demonstrations in the Middle East and Norther Africa morph themselves into armed revolutions, grasping for some faction to feel affinity for, eventually with many settling into a rote positionism around supporting the YPG. Domestically we watched Occupy rise and fall, and with it the influence that many of us had. And, just as in past times where the high wears off, and many are left with arrest records, injuries, trauma and a sense of loss, the internal dynamics of many collections of anarchists fell into a worst sort of infighting, a dynamic that often does little but heighten the sense of betrayal many of us feel toward others of similar political identifications. In this space many things became very clear to many of us, specifically the folly and lack of calculation that led us down the path of replicating movement building processes, first almost out a sense of tradition, and then out of sense of strategic justification. What has arisen from these ashes is not only the implosion of many of the "scenes" that had sustained activity for many years, but also a new tendency, one based in a sense of pessimism that, if we are to be honest without ourselves, is more than a little justified, at least on an emotional level.

What occurred in this process was not only the collapse of relationships, the betrayal of friends, cynical attempts at political positioning and the use of internal dynamics to damage those that we felt wronged us, but more, what occurred was that the future, or at least the vision of the future, collapsed. For a moment it seemed as if everything was falling apart. Regimes were falling, people were coming out into the streets, conflicts were happening with increasing regularity within cities around the country; we felt powerful. And then it collapsed.. With this collapse what disappeared was not only "the movement", for whatever that is or was, but the entire idea that there was a future that one could fight for, and a more or less safe space to do that fighting from. What dies cannot merely be written off as the death of a mythology, even if that mythology, of the glorious revolutionaries leading the mass movement, was one that many of us had wished the death of long ago. Rather, what died was a worldview, a framework that took the past as a harbinger of the present, and thought of the present as leading to some clear, "better" future. This cannot also be written off as the folly of naive and youthful idealism, although there is no shortage of that. Rather, the entire anarchist ethos, understood in its traditional sense, underwent yet another death. The conflicts largely arose in the attempt to make it rise again in another form. But, within this process, one that many of us have become intimately familiar with over the years, another tendency rose, a tendency based in pessimism. This tendency has taken on some interesting characteristics, and has fused together some trajectories of thought that veer in very different directions, but which have settled within a more or less passive posture toward futurity.

This initial tendency was inaugurated by a series of texts, but which culminated in Letters Journal. The structure of the journal itself was based in a conceptual critique of anarchist ontology, the fundamental conceptual underpinnings of the "anarchist project" and the reliance on mass movements in an age of increasing surveillance, degrading capacity to fight and the increasing realization that the actions that many of us

lauded as being at the height of revolutionary activity were in themselves relatively minor in comparison with the obstacles we faced and the sheer force of the enemy. This often culminated in the thesis that the best that we can do at this moment, and potentially the most effective course of action, was to withdraw, and to maintain a position of being "pro-revolutionary". This concept of the "pro-revolutionary" functions as an attempt to prevent the collapse of the entire revolutionary idea, and an implosion into the sad, pathetic acceptability politics of generations past, while still recognizing that the time to act may not be the current moment. The central argument here centers around the thesis that the end of hope is a central point that must recreate the basis for the very possibility of the concept of revolution, and that this lack of hope has emerged through contingencies that are outside of our control; a sort of passive disappointment grounded in external circumstance. Though Letters elicited a number of very harsh reactions, it is not only based in a thesis that many of us have entertained, but is also a harbinger of things that would emerge just a series of years later[13].

This attempt to articulate the concept of the abortive future, and a process through which this can the thought, also emerges in a slightly different form in *Desert*[14]. Within this text the basis through which the possibility of the traditional revolutionary future is abandoned lies less in the inability of revolution to occur, and more in the fact that something that can be termed revolution in the traditional sense has not occurred. In this non-occurrence the meta-conditions of conflict have become hopeless in themselves, not through some form of degrading ability to mobilize force, but rather through the inability to reverse the effects of having failed, in this case the effects are centered on ecological degradation. Rather than the conclusion come to in Letters, that we can remain "pro-revolutionary" while not engaging at all, Desert makes the argument that within this condition spaces for activity become possible through the

---

13   Letters Journal (2009–2013). *Letters Journal: Issues 1-4*. Philadelphia. Letters Journal
14   Anonymous (2011). *Desert*

same conditions that render the concept of revolution both impossible and irrelevant. Within the destruction of the ecological carrying capacity of the planet, a process that the anonymous author argues is irreversible, the conditions for the sustainability of the state degrade at the same time that the concept of revolution, framed around this concept of a "better future", also become impossible. In this space possibilities occur on the frontier, not for some unitary political force or vision, which has always been at best a fiction, for for a multiplicity of processes to emerge in response to the collapse of ecological condition. Within this framework, again, the impossibility of the future is less a result of failure, and more of a result of a passive condition that renders the concept of revolutionary vision an impossibility within the current scenario, but possibilities may arise within the dynamics of events in themselves.

Within this thesis we see many of the same characteristics that we saw in the earlier example, and that we have often witnessed in Christian groups that fail in their predictions of the end of the world; the future that we thought was going to occur failed to manifest, and as a result the entirety of our approaches to temporality itself must change, and be centered around a new concept of metaphysics. Within the framework of Letters, and similar works, the framework centers around a failure in the base concepts of the traditional revolutionary project that becomes apparent in the current conditions. Within Desert the approach is different, beginning with the thesis that even if the revolutionary project were to, hypothetically, be based on solid ground, that it becomes irrelevant in the context of an irreversibly degrading ecosystem. What joins these theses together is not the shape of the argument itself, but a foundational double move. On the one hand there is the argument that the traditional revolutionary project was based on an almost fanciful worldview, which conceived of a reading of past events, connected them to some interpretation of the present moment, and then led to an abortive future due to the failings of the conceptual foundations themselves, coupled with external conditions. On the other hand, both make a second move, one

that attempts to remedy this gap in worldview with the positing of another worldview, albeit one based in the failure of the former. Within both argument there is the positing of another future, but in an odd sort of way. What takes the place of the definitive declarations of future events that populate almost the entire corpus of revolutionary theory is an open space, and then the positing of the persistence of this open space, the lack of hope in the future, with a declaration of approach toward this lack. In this the openness of the future is declared, through the death of the former worldview, and then replaced with the declaration of the constancy of this condition. In this replacement the very structure of the concept of worldview is reconstructed, through a reading of the past, the interpretation of present moment and the declaration of a future that follows from these moments which motivates a conceptual practice of actual activity.

In the concept of the abortive future the crisis of worldview is opened, a gap that opens in the very attempt to conjoin temporality into a singular narrative. Within this conceptual collapse the concepts of the past, present and future are able to become open possibilities. The conflicts within so-called political groupings emerge not at the moment of the collapse of worldview, although there are definitely many that attempt to hold on to the previous way of making sense of things; and, we have seen much of this with the persistence of platformism. Rather, the primary conflict emerges over the space created by the open conflict. Within the above texts Letters was more clearly attacked, with some going so far as to issue threatening Youtube videos targeted at the journal. This rejection, which can be clearly seen as a reaction against the project within the context of the moment when many anarchists in the US felt that they were gaining ground, is less a rejection of the arguments in the journal itself, which were often very well crafted, and more a rejection of the concept of the present and future that were being proposed. Though this rejection was often based on misreadings, or non-readings, and less on careful analysis, the conflict arose not through the argument that the anarchist worldview was based in concepts that had failed to come to fruition in any

meaningful way, and more based in the concept of disengagement that was being proposed. This rejection is only possible, on a purely conceptual level, to the degree that there is a futurity posited within the pessimist conclusion. In other words, the conflict does not arise from the critique of the "anarchist project", but arises from the attempt to draw a conclusion, to close the gap opened in the implosion or crisis in worldview, and to impose another worldview in that space, one of the persistence of the impossibility of concerted revolutionary activity.

ABORTIVE FUTURES AND THE IMPASSES

What we have seen in both post-structuralism and the pessimist turn are attempts to compensate for the collapse of worldview, while attempting to maintain a position outside of the tendency to construct worldview, or to understand the totality of existence through the concept of meaning. When we speak of meaning here we are speaking of it in a Kierkegaardian sense. Meaning, in this sense, is the inscription of necessary, universal meaning to the moment, and then the attempt to posit some material immanence to this meaning, to make the claim that this meaning is necessary in the moment itself, rather than just existing as some attempt to make sense of the moment without being able to embody or encompass the moment itself. In other words, within this attempt to move beyond the construction of worldview we find two specific moves occurring, something very much akin to the moves that occur within Schmitt, but which diverge from the Schmittian conclusion in a profoundly different direction. On the one hand, within the pessimist turn, we find the very concept of action being torn away from the notion of some causal future, that we can act to form the future in some definite way, causing the collapse of the assumption of given presents and necessary futures. In this rejection of the concept of the necessary future departing from a given present, we come to separate the notion of the present from certainty,

separate it from the future, and collapse the structure of thought that formed the foundations of modernism, that we can somehow predict or determine the future through some sort of virtuous action in the present. Beyond just imploding the concept of the promised exalted future, this formation separates the present from the future in definitive ways. On the other hand there is a recognition, in the post-structuralist, of the impossibility of making sense of things in absolute ways, in ways that are either understood between people in the exact same way, true, outside of history and persistent. With these moves we come into contact with another possibility, one that is based on departing from a position, not of attempting to close the possibilities opened up through the implosion of worldview, but one that is capable of taking the impasse as a point of departure.

Now, it is clear, that in both the post-structuralist and pessimist moves there are clear failures. Post-structuralism collapses into a sort of inaction, in which we assume that our conceptual critiques are enough, while the pessimist conclusion falls into the most vague attempts to still posit a future, just a future that occurs regardless of the actions that we take in the present. But, to understand these failures we have to understand the roots of these failures, roots that lie in the very same dynamics that structure the critique in the first place, a reliance on a connection between some conceptual framework and the concept of action. Within the pessimist turn action becomes either impossible or merely symbolic and aspirational not because we are actually separated from projecting futurity in the conceptualization of action, we always project some sort of futurity in action, even in the most simple ways. Rather, the ability to act is abolished to the degree that we cannot connect this action to the achievement of the future. It is a lament rather than a recognition, a lament of the ability to attach a conceptualization of the past and present to a concept of the future, and then use this conceptual universe to frame the totality of action, to inscribe a conceptual universe in action, or to make action the symbolic expression of some sort of conceptual framework. Within

the post-structuralist milieu the inability to act, for many thinkers, or to only act conceptually, derives from the latent reliance on some sort of conceptual grounding for action, some sense of justification; a reliance on an ethicality of action. This reliance on ethicality exists alongside a discourse that makes this same ethicality, this same attempt to ground action in a Kantian noumena, an impossibility in itself.

It is within these dynamics that we continually end up within an infinite repetition, an attempt to compensate for the necessary failure of theory to encompass the moment in its entirety, to encompass the materially particular within the transcendentally conceptual, the unspecific, the general. From the "red vs green" debate that occurred in the early 2000s to the current discussion of where to depart from the failures of Occupy and the near total collapse of the anarchist milieu in North America into a dynamic of desparate one off actions, "in-fighting" and snarky comments on Anarchist News, we have watched this process play itself out again and again; and there are no shortage of examples of this within anarchist history. It is important to recognize the roots of this dynamic, the fight not over the collapse of worldview, but over the attempt to determine the terms of its reinscription, to determine doctrinal direction. Outside of the assumption of some sort of mythological unity that forms the concept of the anarchist "movement" in itself, this tendency, this infinite repetition, is borne out of the attempt to ground action in some universal narrative. It is within this attempt that we fall back into the worst forms of activism. Within this dynamic the world becomes framed as nothing other than a symbolic space, one that is the product of concepts, with the moments of engagement themselves being nothing other than illustrations of this conceptual consistency. In this we remove ourselves into a noumenal space, one in which everything is reduced to the symbolic, and then lament the inability of action to impact material conditions. This endemic ineffectiveness is not the symptom of some intractability of the moment, or something like this, but a result of the inability to recognize the particularity of the moment itself, the inability

to know all possible things about all possible moments, the impossibility of actually making sense of anything in certain ways, or finding some universal grounding for action within conceptual justification.

In other words, to escape this endless cycle is not a question of determining some new "strategy", or conceptual narrative that will exist under the conceptual term "strategy", but rather a process of abandoning the concept of the answer, the narrative, doctrine at all, and to begin from a different place. It is possible to separate the conceptual operations that create a notional distinction between what we identify as the enemy and those we identify as friends, or to identify concepts that we have some speculative affinity for, without either attempting to argue that this expresses the totality of all possible things, is anything other that provisional and speculative, or that this provisional and speculative framework should dictate the terms and activities that are engage with and in throughout an attempt to eliminate the enemy. Rather than attempting to legitimize action in certain narratives we must depart from the impossibility of this, from a critique of the ways that this reduces action to the symbolic, to activism, and to begin to conceptualize a way to think the unthinkable, to make sense of action in ways that take the notion of sense as utilitarian, as more or less effective in leading to some result that we understand to be conceptually important in some speculative way. In this we come to respect a necessary separation, an infinite distance between the conceptual and the material, and operate within the limitations of conceptuality, while maintaining the space for this conceptuality to shift, as it necessarily must, without either eroding the grounds for activity, which is always based in provisional speculation, or leading to some catastrophic struggle over the attempt to impose worldview as some sort of fictional political vision. In other words, the question being raised here is not the question of concepts, which always necessarily function as mechanisms of attempting to make sense of things, but is the question of prefiguration, and the tendency toward prefiguration as process of legitimation for action and attempt to process through strategic questions

from the assumed point of departure of prefigurative worlds. To escape this process of the injunction to reimpose conceptual worldview, claim a conceptual-material fusion, and then to structure our point of departure for activity from this symbolic space, where the world is replaced by the assumed legitimacy of the concept, is not a question of a new framework outside of this tradition, but, rather, a question of what occurs if there is no framework that can be posited in a definite way, if we always act from a point of speculation, and nothing but speculation.

All around us many of those that identify with being within the radical milieu are searching for answers, some going as far as to forgo conflict and embrace the most absurd forms of new ageism. Others have abandoned any concept of the future at all, arguing, quietly, that if the future that they envision cannot come to pass then conflict is useless. Both attempts are grounded not in the process of the collapse of worldview, but in the failure to embrace the possibility and dynamism that this collapse allows, of course at the cost of a pseudo-religious modernist narrative of moralism and certainty. We have been asked, as this project has progressed, what the right posture toward action is, and have been criticized for not providing an answer to this question. The question is assuming a whole universe of concepts in its very formulation, but, simply, is assuming that the answer is even possible; that there is some conceptual form of making sense that can encompass the complex contingencies of particular and dynamic moments. This clearly leads to an issue, not for the inability toi provide something that passes for an answer, but for the assumption that the role of the written text or the public group is to either provide such a thing, or to operate along the lines of supposed answers. Not only will we not pretend to be priests, to know some unique truth about the world, but also because there is no answer to that question, no way to fulfill that demand in any justifiable way. We have nothing to teach anyone, we have nothing special to say, except to possibly point to a route of egress, a route of escape, and that is all that any of us can possibly do. This will not be able to be judged by its truth value, but only to the degree that it actually

leads to an actually effective escape in itself. It may be that the future is not only not knowable, but that the very attempt to ground some concept of activity in a generalized and atemporal notion of the future is the very thing that prevents analysis from functioning as something other than a discursive form.

Bibliography

Stirner, Max (1995). *The Ego and Its Own*. Trans Leopold, David. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press

Schmitt, Carl (1996). *The Concept of the Political*. Trans Schwab, George. Chicago. University of Chicago Press

Foucault, Michel (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trand Sheridan, Alan. New York. Penguin Press

Kropotkin, Peter (1995). *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*. Ed Shatz, Marshall. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press

Goldman, Emma(1969). *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Mineola. Dover Publications

Lenin, Vladimir(1975). *VI Lenin: Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Moscow. Progress Publishers

Mussolini, Benito (1975). *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*. New York. Gordon Press

Badiou. Alain (2012). *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings*. Trans Elliott, Gregory. New York. Verso Press

Tiqqun (2010). *Introduction to Civil War*. Trans Smith, Jason and Galloway, Alexander. Los Angeles. Semiotext(e)

The Invisible Committee(2009). *The Coming Insurrection*. Los Angeles. Semiotext(e)

Letters Journal (2009–2013). *Letters Journal: Issues 1-4*. Philadelphia. Letters Journal

Anonymous (2011). *Desert

GAMES WE PLAY: STRATEGY, RULE-SETS, IDEOLOGY

"Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don't say: "There must be something common, or they would not be called 'games' "—but look and see whether there is anything common to all. —For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look! —Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Board games, what are some? Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. —Are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis."

—Ludwig Wittgenstein §66, *Philosophical Investigations*

Games are intertwined with the history of modern warfare and, thus, as a particularly durable method by which particular ways of thinking and visions of grand strategy or individuated tactics are learned even from relatively simple games. Chess has its origins as a courtly game to teach strategy as does Go, hence their use by Deleuze to differentiate visions of strategy[1]. A full and nuanced history of games (Chess for example), and their use as training tools for particular military aptitudes (for example Kreigspiel as a variant of chess), is lengthy enough to be beyond the scope of this piece. For the purposes of this paper, we will be focusing exclusively on wargaming in order to avoid the excessive exegesis of simply documenting every game used by a court or military institution to instill a particular trait, skill or strategy. Wargaming itself, as Wittgenstein generalizes to all gaming, is a fairly wide field held together by family resemblance. Wargaming encompasses almost all forms of military simulation ranging from the "grand strategy" games such as the Civilization series by Sid Meyer to jingoistic simulations of armed conflict like the Call of Duty series; from those which take place in grim dark dystopian futures (Warhammer 40,000), to mirror army games (a simple example being Stratego, and a more complex example being Guy Debord's Kreigspiel)[2], and set piece grand strategy games (Risk is a simple example, while Diplomacy is a far more complex one which encompasses comparatively less global conflict and formalized—rather than informal—diplomacy). However, these games provide varying degrees of verisimilitude abstracted from actual conflict and war, although simulations also exist where players stand "in" the game utilizing either simulation arms or simulating

---

1   *A Thousand Plateaus*, 352 plagiarized somewhat directly by RAND in Networks and Netwars in a directly militarized understanding of both games.
2   As Kreigspiel has a number of iterations it is worth noting that Kreigspiel can mean a Prussian military analog to contemporary wargames such as Warhammer or more realistic historically rooted wargames (although with less complex die-based rules for resolving conflict), to a chess variant (rooted in the Prussian military game where players play in ignorance of the position of their opponents pieces with a referee to declare if a move is legal) and finally Debord's game. For purposes of clarity if context does not immediately indicate which is being spoken of the games will be written as Kreigspiel, Kreigspiel (Debord) and Kreigspiel (Chess variant).

the war room simulating the strategizing behind conflict. This is not to say that every wargame is utilized by the military (which would be patently false), or that all wargames teach a real military skill. Call of Duty is a sterling example of a game which doesn't teach anything about military tactics yet teaches jingoism very effectively. Alternatively, the more interesting inquiries—rather than those interested in some complete history of wargames—lie in the questions: *'What do wargames teach?'*; *'How is this teaching accomplished?'*; and *'What are the limitations of wargaming?'*

Thus this inquiry concerns itself, at its core, with verisimilitude and authenticity. I.e., the aim of wargaming is to teach the player something about warfare then the wargame, in theory, should mimic warfare in a way that makes the rules and game meaningful to that end. This doesn't necessarily mean that well developed or effective wargaming should require a standing army to simulate the game's maneuvers in real time, or even require particularly elaborate stage, but the pedagogy of the game needs to match way of thinking that is being encouraged. One exemplary extremum is the game CandyLand; , there is no (military/strategy) benefit to playing CandyLand. As CandyLand is meant to teach color recognition, there is no way to gain an edge (other than by discretely cheating by stacking cards), because movement on the board is dictated by color matching the next space of the color of the card you draw. To reiterate, while CandyLand is a rule based game, it teaches something of no particular value to military thinkers and lacks any truly helpful input—from the perspective of game theoretics—in learning to think strategically, nor about military strategy in particular. In theory, relatively abstract games teach players some level of strategic thinking. For example, chess is a game of strategy, specifically one that aims to teach about learning and anticipating your opponent's moves. The game has very little to do with military strategy directly. However, the aim of most (contemporary) wargames is to move from abstraction to very concrete methods of teaching military strategy.

Although certainly responding to a less dramatic inadequacy, *Instructions for the Representation of Tactical Maneuvers under the Guise of a Wargame*

(Kreigspiel) was developed by Baron von Reisswitz to bring wargames of the Prussian officer corps more in line with what they were actually tasked with doing. That is, games "in existence at the time were based on the ancient game of chess (itself dating in the modern sense the Middle Ages and further back in more primitive forms) or else on some type of card game. Despite multiple variations of the standard game of chess, games of the period were non-representational and didn't require the player to make decisions using the same types of logic that a real life military commander would."[3] Baron von Reisswitz thus created a scaled model map where two players mediated by an umpire made movements. Reisswitz' game contained only rules for movement and had no rules for inflicted casualties;the outcomes of player decisions (from each side or player) per round is left to the discretion of the umpire. The younger Reisswitz (the son of the originator) made a number of mechanical improvements to the original game including the distribution of larger maps to each team[4]. On these larger terrain boards, pieces were moved by the umpire for the viewing of spectators, and the umpire himself. These larger boards also served to change the scale of the conflict; this empowered players with the ability to launch brigade level maneuvers in-game, and codified rules for new combat situations, in addition to those marked by the provision of odds tables to more accurately account for damage. Both versions of Kreigspiel were well received by the Kaiser's court and some officers. Specifically, the version by Reisswitz the younger was immediately popular with elements of the military, to the point that it spawned several officers' clubs, and was even disseminated within the military by order of the Kaiser himself. Despite the resounding success of his game in some quarters,

3   Tactical Wargamer, "The Origins of Wargaming" tacticalwargamer.com/articles/gamehistory/gamehistory1.htm
4   Originally Kriegspiel (the shortened name of Baron von Reisswitz' game, *Instructions for the Representation of Tactical Maneuvers under the Guise of a Wargame*) involved revealed and unrevealed pieces, each player got to look at the board with the pieces they knew the locations of exposed to them, wrote down their move and then the board had to be re-arranged for the other player (no rules existed for conflicts with more than 2 sides). By issuing both sides a map, spectators could watch the battle unfold and maps could be updated quickly to reflect the position of pieces. This removed an enormous time sink from the original edition of the game.

Reisswitz the younger ultimately committed suicide after being effectively exiled and passed over for meaningful promotion. Speculatively, his suicide was related to the "anti-Kriegsspiel feeling [had] arisen in some quarters. Some of the older generals were of the opinion that the game would give young officers an inflated idea of their abilities to manage Brigades and Divisions and leave them dissatisfied with ordinary regimental service."[5] From a technical and ideological standpoint this abridged history has brought up two important points:

(1) simulation necessitates numerous rules to resolve actions and those rules can be of increasing complexity (cf. fig 1)

(2) military elements are necessarily distrustful of simulation standing in for actual experience.

Focusing on the first element [the second will be bracketed until later], one of the inherent difficulties to a simulation of armed conflict is the numerous variables to have to be accounted for for a reasonable level of verisimilitude. Additionally, to do this either definitive computations need to be made (i.e. the time intensive process of accounting for every bullet from each unit engaged in whatever period of time a round represents along with elements such as cover, visibility, weather, terrain, etc.) which is theoretically impossible, having the umpire make an educated guess (which is unsatisfying) or to create a streamlined table for doing rough but qualified computations (fig 1).

fig 1.

Example II. A battery of red Artillery coming into action is enfiladed with case-shot from (3) three 12-pdrs. (blue) at 1,500 yards. Range being known, *what are the casualties of red during three minutes?*

Referee allows "∷ Heavy Fire"; Tabular Effect is, therefore, 46 men (see Table O).

To determine the loss in cannoneers, Cases 5, 9, 47, 54, and 62, apply; and the resulting multiplier is

$$1 \times \frac{1}{1\frac{1}{2}} \times \frac{2}{1} \times \frac{3}{2} \times \frac{1}{1} = \frac{1}{5} \text{ and } \frac{1}{5} \text{ of } 46 = 9 \text{ men, i. e., 1 "killed" and 8 "wounded."}$$

To determine the loss in horses, Cases 7, 47, 54, and 62, apply;

$$\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{2}{1} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{2}{1} = 1, \text{ and } 46 \times 1 = 46 \text{ horses.}$$

To determine the loss in drivers, Cases 10, 47, 54, and 62, apply;

$$\frac{1}{20} \times \frac{2}{1} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{1} = \frac{3}{20} \text{ and } \frac{3}{20} \text{ of } 46 = 6.9, \text{ say 7, i. e., 1 "killed" and 6 "wounded."}$$

5   Leeson, Bill. "The Origins of Kreigspiel" http://www.kriegsspiel.org.uk/index.php/articles/origins-history-of-kriegsspiel/3-origins-of-the-kriegsspiel

While this provides the player with an (ostensibly) satisfying answer it also can become unmanageable to get through moves quickly (even in a game that rather than having individualized soldiers is built of blocks representing units, battalions, etc.). As that is 1 individual action (that has to be tallied to know when a unit is broken or exterminated) in a conflict that contains many units all of which potentially attack each other, taking a number of qualifications as to what table to consult before applying damage and then tracking the losses inflicted on every unit on the board (fig 2). If one eschews tables and instead adds a degree of uncertainty in outcome (substituting die rolls derived from tables with modifiers and their own mechanics) this exponentially slows the game down as more and more rules must be consulted to determine the necessary mechanics to resolve combat (even on the battalion level which then can become more and more complex as representation moves from macro units to individual soldiers, material or vehicles or ammunition counts & etc.). However, each level of immersion added such as breaking battalions into units,squads, or fireteams or even individual soldiers alternately forcing resource management (fuel, ammunition, provisions, etc.) increasingly forces numerous calculations and tallies to occur as the game advances.


fig 2.

This is, naturally, somewhat tedious and there are a number of solutions to the division between "people who want to move in the direction of modelling and to develop this aspect [verisimilitude in accounting for all of the factors in calculation] in further depth, and others who are more content with approximations in the idea that it is really intuition, strategic nous, that is being inculcated and superficial resemblance to

the mechanics of war is thereby sufficient."[6] This tension or division can be traced by the difference between fairly obtuse rulesets and heavy amounts of calculation (as favored by players of modern Kreigspiel or other versions of tactical wargaming like Warhammer[7]). Alternately, some versions of wargaming inherently simplify combat actions such as Guy Debord's version of Kreigspiel[8] where players are set up mechanically identical pieces as they wish to and then fight for control of the board with relatively simple movement and combat rules (every piece has an offensive and defensive score and a range). This creates a much more simple combat than measuring distance, consulting a table and rolling die to determine damage (in the most simplified wargames). Figure 3 illustrates the difference between this element of mechanical complexity.

fig 3.
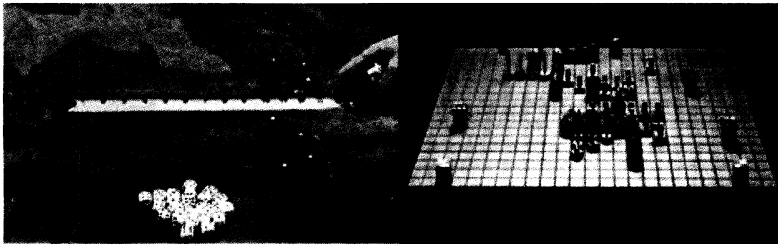
6   Bousquet, Antoine. "Marshalling the Real: War and Simulation". http:// thedisorderofthings.com/2013/01/10/marshalling-the-real-war-and-simulation/

7   Warhammer has the advantage of not dealing with "real units or things" so while the rules are almost impenetrably obtuse there is no real argument about how much damage a krak grenade would do as a krak grenade only exists in the world of warhammer while simulating the damage of an AK47 assault rifle along with its range and accuracy is a question that can be answered with physics and thus players can become embroiled in largely technical arguments about the outcome of their selected actions. Given the (generalized) usage of wargaming to teach modern military strategy it is doubtful that military colleges encourage their cadets playing Warhammer, however it does illustrate an almost endlessly complex set of rules. `

8   Those interested in the history of Debord's game can turn to http://www. bookforum.com/inprint/014_05/2071

The technical aspect that slows Debord's Kreigspiel is rules related to lines of communication.

As the rules note:

> All units must remain in direct connection with their own lines of communication, or be adjacent to a friendly unit in communication. If not, the unit goes offline and becomes inert. Units are free to move *out* of communicative range, but once offline they may not move, attack, or defend themselves. (However any nearby friendly units will still lend their defense to offline units.) Relay units are an exception: they may move freely in and out of communication, yet will only relay the arsenal's signal if in direct line of sight.
>
> Lines of communication are blocked by mountains and by enemy units. However communication passes freely through mountain passes and is not blocked by enemy relays.[9]

Because of the complexity of what a legal move is (because you can move out of a line of communication becoming an inactive unit) and making sure that both the immobile lines of communication radiating from your arsenals and relays keep all of your units within communication (or at least that you are sure of which units are in and out of communication) this requires quite a bit of time (using strings, rulers or dry erase markers) despite the relatively simple rules of combat this game quickly becomes time consuming. Of course Debord's game was not oriented around combat but on lines of communication (a very skilled player could theoretically defeat their opponent by capturing both relays and cutting connection between their opponents arsenals putting the entire opposing army offline). As a wargame one might say that for Debord combat was the least interesting aspect, rather he was interested in how communication is a necessary aspect and how it is managed. However, the game (consisting of 5 unit moves and 1 attack per turn) crawls as you must constantly track units that are online and offline. There is, despite

9   http://r-s-g.org/kriegspiel/rules_units.php

this, one way to quickly expedite play by leaving tracking and a list of legal moves (including which moves would put a unit offline) which is to pass the task of tracking such things to a computer leaving players to focus on their moves rather than dedicating their time to being certain of the online/offline status of their pieces.[10]

One of the "selling points" to fixed value combat is that it allows for unencumbered skilled play; that is: a well executed maneuver will always have the same theoretical value (in terms of damage) yet this creates a sort of static chessboard effect where there are no sudden reversals, failures of units to execute properly or suboptimal damage dealt against an exposed enemy for any of a variety of factors. That is, there are no surprises in such a game as there is no space for "luck". On the other hand: dice or other forms of randomized outputs randomize outcomes to the point where an outcome is largely inscrutable. As Craig Stern notes "for a tactical combat system to work, the player has to be able to figure out the likely results of his or her potential actions."[11] With dice rolls resolving combat, there is the potential that a series of tactical blunders are rewarded by sheer luck and a series of brilliant moves go up in flames due to botched rolls. While military planning would like to work with degrees of certainty for outcomes absolute outcomes will cloud the capacity for accounting for alternate outcomes while truly random (or close to random) outcomes will obscure any potential for learning what constitutes a good strategy. In terms of design, the goal is for a strong degree of confidence in outcome with the ability to see potential drawbacks to an error in execution (otherwise rube goldberg like strategies would be perfect) and

---

10   http://r-s-g.org/kriegspiel/images/KS_screenshot_08Dec27a.png

11   http://sinisterdesign.net/the-battle-system-i-wish-rpgs-would-stop-using/ ; an observant reader may note that I am frequently jumping from questions of game design for console/pc gaming and actual military gaming. Generally speaking, while there is often a superficial separation between the two, questions regarding design are fundamentally the same even if one has fairly drastic impacts (i.e. effects Pentagon planning for military engagement) and the other generally has to ask questions of "fun." However, both are intent on creating an immersive ruleset that conveys a particularity of combat which at least superficially binds them together.

to simulate this there needs to be some degree of non-predetermined outcome that isn't random enough to remove any element of strategy. The problem with this is that it is not well simulated on tabletops as the only way to provide a range of outcomes is to randomize outcomes with dice. While you can ultimately set dice outcomes to basically any integer (for example you could simulate a higher base # by increasing the number of dice to give a higher lower range ex. 1d20 has a range of 1–20 with all outcomes having a 5% chance while the probability of different #s is marginally skewed with 2d10 with a range of 2–20 if you were looking for a more specific range (i.e. a high floor with a range of uncertainty around it) you could have a chart like 200 + 2d6 which would give a range of 202–212 these of course can only give a good outcome to the degree that the ranges meaningfully map to anything and to account for more and more variables would require more and more charts to provide inputs the core generation of some sort of score (damage for instance).

COMPUTERS FACILITATING CALCULATION

One of the major changes for this, although obviously for hobby gamers pens, paper, dice and miniatures still suffice and provide a strong hobby, was the advent of computers. Computers provide "convenient feedback to the player as to the state of the game" simply because computers are good at tracking a number of variables and providing (or at least applying) rules.[12] While in terms of civilian applications for hobby gaming this has a strong impact, theoretically a heavily rule based system with incredibly dense rules for resolving combat and a number of skills to be tracked in terms of interaction (let's say Warhammer) is capable of being reduced into a computer playing field which can track all available legal moves and positions

12 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSBn77_h_6Q

and keep rules for things like point-buy systems[13] and resolving con-
flict by applying all the tables necessary for conflict resolution from
a difficult set of tables to choose from like in fig 2. The awkward wed-
ding of this form of simulation to military planning was the product of
a number of transformations in warfare. Firstly, the advent of modern
warfare (or at least warfare where highly advanced scientific equipment
and counter-measures have to be deployed) reduced the significance of
top military commanders. Concretely: what would normally be consid-
ered logistics (in the earliest form of military usage the baggage train that
brought food, water and other necessary supplies to an army that was
largely made up of infantry) became of increasing importance as the sci-
entific production of arms and strategic weapons became less about pure
military knowledge and more about scientific knowledge. While many
military transformations in logistics failed to displace traditional mili-
tary leadership; consider the difference between the individuated tents
of Greek armies where every soldier was in charge of their own rations
and consequently was an army incapable of traveling long distances as
every champion brought a number of non-combat comforts along with
him and the more professional Roman armies fundamentally changed
warfare (allowing for armies to travel further and standardizing the kit
of many units) it did not change the command structure of a military but
rather formalized it. On the other hand the rise of gunpowder weapons,
aircraft, artillery, telecommunications and most importantly the atom-
ic bomb necessitated the rise of a class of non-soldiers who specialized
in the efficient production of material. For example the efficiency of ar-
tillery has always been linked to a strong cohort of engineers or, more

---

13 Since Warhammer has so many different units while there are rules for commanders
    and the necessity of certain command structures along with vast differences in the
    application of each unit the simplified way of having simulated conflict is assigning
    point values to each unit and having every conflict dictated by armies of equal
    strength based off of the point based purchase of armies with a hard cap (i.e. a
    400 point army duel). More realistic military simulations may use a different
    permutation where resources are applied to building units (tanks, jetcraft, ICBM
    batteries etc.) along with their maintenance and garrison costs & etc.

importantly, how the rise of gunpowder armies (prior to the capacity to "fix" atmospheric nitrogen) lead to the necessity of large numbers of engineers to make enormous amounts of standardized gunpowder. These and many other newly technological changes required a new sort of command (one which rather than being skilled in the "great game" of war was skilled in the management and production and distribution of supplies effectively), essentially a sort of weaponized economist or engineer. While strategy certainly still played a part in modernized warfare, a complex bureaucracy managing men, supplies and the production of arms became wedded to military enterprise because regardless of the tactical brilliance of a commander the inability to field a meaningful military (that is one with sufficient ammunition, high quality weapons (measured in range, rate of fire or both), accurate or powerful cannons (or other artillery) or, as we ease closer to the era of world wars, complex machinery like tanks, bombers, naval destroyers and other incredibly complex machines which not only had to be created but had to be created with designs which accomplished military aims without introducing crushing debt.[14] Weapons developers and military strategists even from the get go had difficulty seeing eye to eye, as documented in *The Social History of the Machine Gun*, military strategists saw no value to a weapon capable of firing thousands of bullets in a continuous stream frequently placing it with artillery (where its lack of accuracy made it effectively useless)

---

14 It is probably worth noting that the military and design specialists do not see eye to eye, for example the A10 "Warthog" is probably one of the few American fighter planes that is built for contemporary engagements (it strafes deadly machine gun fire and has a low top speed making it excellent for fighting an insurgency) but "sky jocks" would rather fight a theoretical dogfight between high tech sound barrier surpassing jet fighters and while government simulation indicates that there is no particular value in improving such a technology (in a theoretical war between a comparably powerful nations all pilots will be dead in the first few hours of engagement and most of the aerial fighting will be done by drones where the real military question is how quickly we can produce useable drones). In short: theoretically these interests work in harmony creating reasonable technology of great efficiency and excellent utility; more often than not these interests create the sort of useless geegaws that populate the pages of *The Baroque Arsenal* as kickbacks between military leaders and defense contractors creates an endless cycle of useless junk.

believing that wars were won by heroic charges (like they were before the implementation of even rudimentary rapid fire designs). This failure to adopt was reflected in the British being almost suicidally wedded to mass charges against machine gun nests manned by the quick adopting Germans. As bombing (specifically bombing against "bottlenecks", see previous issue) became more and more of a focus for conventional warfare the defensive and offensive potentials for bombing became more the purview of thinkers disconnected from the military apparatus because their skillset was divorced entirely from traditional warfighting and was strongly tied to questions of the efficacy of bombing (specifically how to maximize impact of truly powerful explosives as opposed to the artillery shelling of previous wars). The biggest pivot within this was the development of the atomic bomb; as Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi notes:

> The most striking effect of the attainment of a scientifically-based strategic asset (namely, atomic and thermonuclear weapons) was the debasement (or at least supersession) of the personal wisdom of the senior officer rooted in combat experience, in favour of institutions arising from repeated practice in laboratory-staged simulations of future war. Throughout the 1950s, the *avant-garde* among military and their consultants determinedly arrogated authority for strategic planning *from* the lived experience of senior officers to the civilian *virtuosi* of the techniques of Monte Carlo, systems analysis, operational war-gaming, man-machine studies, and other innovations in simulating combat operations.[15]

In essence, weapons which almost completely erased the efficacy of ground troops (a single nuclear bomb could unleash more devastation at a far lower cost than several battalions of ground troops) also changed

15 Ghamari-Tabrizi, Sharon. "Simulating the Unthinkable: Gaming Future War in the 1950s and 1960s" Social Studies of Science vol 30, no 2, 164 available at https://msrc.fsu.edu/system/files/Ghamari-Tabrizi%202000%20Simulating%20the%20unthinkable-gaming%20future%20war%20in%20the%201950s%20and%201960s.pdf

the questions related to strategy. No longer was it necessary to simulate (theoretically) the engagement between forces of nearly equal (or at least comparable) strength where victory was attained by strategic vision and utilization of the surrounding area. Rather, war was (in the eyes of strategic planners) the purview of technocrats who would be capable of finding a winning density of nuclear weapons and applicable targets to make the United States the sole superpower.[16] The immediate problem was how to simulate the exchange of weapons between two superpowers (once the USSR acquired a nuclear arsenal) when there were no historical battles to provide data for a simulated exchange (the only war time use of nuclear weapons was the United States unveiling them by nuking Hiroshima and Nagasaki).

Originally this was solved by war room exchanges where teams (representing the USSR and the USA) were fed information by a moderator (some of it incomplete) and made decisions. The moderator then made a series of guesses about the outcome and gave another round of information to the participants who made another set of moves.[17] While these games were viewed positively by some politicians (while John Kennedy never participated he was intrigued by their application as much of his cabinet had glowing reviews), military commanders found the intrusion on their turf to be insulting and openly resented the simulations believing them to be a waste of time. Additionally, the simulators themselves were flummoxed by what was actually accomplished by the exercise. While RAND and other civilian scientists were certain that utilizing systems theory they had access to better answers in the absence of more qualifiable data that had existed for previous war simulations.[18] That is,

---

16 This doesn't mean the United States abandoned the idea of ground force engagements but rather that ground force engagements were also becoming the ground of strategic planning for a group of technocrats. For the rise of RAND corporation amongst this an excellent resource is *Soldiers of Reason*, for their role in nuclear strategy consult *Wizards of Armageddon* and for their poor decision making when it became questions of human beings in a theater of war see *The Best and the Brightest*.

17 If this sounds like the earliest versions of Kreigspiel this is not co-incidental.

18 cf. Ghamari-Tabrizi p. 164-165

in the absence of real data on what the exchange of nuclear weapons would look like (because nuclear weapons were largely detonated in areas lacking real population density or particularly diverse terrain).[19] This is combined with the real lack of understanding the geopolitical goals of the opposition, necessitating a degree of roleplaying (the war room simulations, which were extremely time consuming) or where computers frequently made counter intuitive decisions (IVAN the AI for the USSR was prone to bombing navies which (theoretically) inflicted so much economic damage the USA would capitulate. The simulation necessitated some "gaming," specifically win states needed to be developed and AI's modeled that pursued those win states in what was a convincingly human manner.

Generally speaking, games require a "win state" which is a set of conditions when met allow a player to win. In a more civilian context let's look at Civilization as a franchise. The most recent entry (Civilization 5) has win states that can only be described as extremely "American" one wins through Military Dominance, being the head of the United Nations, achieving technological dominance and colonizing outer space or through becoming a cultural hegemon. By creating a series of win conditions (checkmate in chess or clearing off an opposing army in original kreigspiel) gives rise to a series of efficient ways to achieve such an outcome. Creating a set of best practices to accomplish static goals leads to a narrowing of potential strategies. By way of example, to win a game of Civilization there are only a few ways to pursue victory based off of which civilization you pick (each is optimized for a few win conditions with a few that are completely counter-intuitive for the advantages granted to that particular civilization). Additionally, the resources allocated to your civilization (which are semi-randomized) create an optimum path to achieving victory. Choosing the Zulu makes military victory the best option (given the advantages granted in warfare) meaning that to achieve

19 The pacific atoll bombs were significantly larger than the ones detonated in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and affected unevacuated people but mostly the United States has repeatedly bombed deserts.

victory one has to rush having the necessary components for the military and to conquer the other civilizations quickly because technological progress is somewhat lagged for the Zulu. There are inherent limitations to this as a simulation: the ruleset creates a restrictive playstyle because the baked in assumptions limit the ways in which you can win. For this to work every single variable has to be correct (and to make a game a number of variables that are quite complex must be simplified). Tied to this is the creation of fairly streamlined win-states which also reflect the biases of the creators (the nuclear plans developed by RAND were not so much about "winning" a nuclear war as making initiating an exchange unthinkable); in Civilization you do not win by being a pleasant civilization to live in, for providing adequate food or housing or conserving resources but rather by using those conditions as raw material to fuel a victory. Games teaching strategy will impart the biases of the games creators (and therefore it is impossible to state that there is a game which actually teaches perfect strategic thinking). From an anarchist and specifically insurrectionary standpoint, this seems like an unhelpful conclusion: it is impossible to learn total strategic dominance from any particular simulation and simulation is reflective of both the limited information of the producers of the game and the idea of what victory means. Most recently the RedPill subreddit threatened to invade New Zealand and seemed unaware of what a ridiculous idea this is[20] including the assertion that playing Call of Duty would be helpful in the operation of an M16. While reddit is a garbage dump of humanity (and TheRedPill is among the most loathsome groups of individuals gathered under the Reddit umbrella), this is illustrative of how absurd the notion that one could conquer a nation with a functional military utilizing the skills offered by a video simulation. However, there is something useful within simulations.

Learning the rules to a game allows one to see the viewpoint of the person that designed it and, by extension, limitations and blindspots to

---

20 https://www.reddit.com/r/BestOfOutrageCulture/comments/3brhsy/if_we_really_
wanted_to_we_could_invade_new/

their thinking. Additionally, one can reverse engineer a game and create their own experience out of the ruleset offered to them. This can range from using a video game meant to show the accuracy of the Warren Commission's findings in the assassination of JFK by allowing you to play the role of Lee Harvey Oswald to play HORSE to the Occupy Wall street alterations to the rules of Monopoly (which also reflect the idea that a certain mass of tent cities somehow irreversibly stops corruption). While one of these is simply a grim repurposing of a product that was immediately loathed by the Kennedy estate, the other one teaches us something about strategic planning (in a very limited gamestate) which underlies the assumptions of Occupy Wall Street (at least while it existed). While i sincerely doubt that the planners and leaders at Occupy were busily simulating the outcomes of their plans using Monopoly (or at least i am inclined to hope that they were even marginally more competent than that) it does showcase that their idea of victory was simply getting a high enough level of participation. And this raises the question: what would an anarchist strategy game even *look* like? There is no universally agreed upon win condition for "anarchy" (is it the overthrow of capitalism where we then debate the proper implementation of anarchism according to a mutually agreed upon definition of freedom? property destruction derailing some projects? the end of the surveillance state? something we can't really speak about until it happens?) and how do we reach that goal (a certain mass of people agreeing to a particular definition of anarchy? one big union? a sort of decentered liberalism? the end of 2,000+ years of technological development?). Simulating such a thing is nigh impossible even given the intense complexity of something like economic systems (accepting the premise that collapsing the economy is the real goal given economists themselves are arguably extremely bad at predicting economic behavior) or voting patterns (if we take the accelerationist track to economic devastation and say electing Rand Paul is the means of accomplishing that goal). Even simulating some sort of limited engagement (how can we beat the cops on their own turf) requires questions about

what that means (fighting to a standstill? holding the street? or something more like a military engagement?). This isn't to say games can't simulate a strong level of verisimilitude like the small squad tactics of *Frozen Synapse* or *Rainbow Six.* But rather that there are inherent limitations to simulations and what they can teach even if all that is offered from a particular simulation is a better glimpse at the assumptions of the opposition.

Bibliography

Tactical Wargamer, "The Origins of Wargaming" tacticalwargamer.com/articles/gamehistory/gamehistory1.htm

Leeson, Bill. "The Origins of Kreigspiel" http://www.kriegsspiel.org.uk/index.php/articles/origins-history-of-kriegsspiel/3-origins-of-the-kriegsspiel

Ghamari-Tabrizi, Sharon. "Simulating the Unthinkable: Gaming Future War in the 1950s and 1960s" Social Studies of Science vol 30, no 2, 164 available at https://msrc.fsu.edu/system/files/Ghamari-Tabrizi%202000%20Simulating%20the%20unthinkable-gaming%20future%20war%20in%20the%201950s%20and%201960s.pdf

Bousquet, Antoine. "Marshalling the Real: War and Simulation". http://thedisorderofthings.com/2013/01/10/marshalling-the-real-war-and-simulation/

ACTIVISM, CIVIL WAR, & INSURRECTION.
#BLM, THE NYPD POLICE UNION STRIKE, AND ISMAAIYL BRINSLEY

The NYPD police union strike of 2014–15 captured headlines around the USA. Its novelty owed to the perceived irony of law enforcement officers responding to a violent attack not by "cracking down" on crime, but by withdrawing from auxiliary policing functions to find safety in numbers and limited exposure to civilians. Of the 51 law enforcement officers (LEOs) killed 2014,[1] the assassinations of officers Ramos and Liu by Ismaaiyl Brinsley generated a unique response. We will analyze this response in order to illuminate distinctions between activism, crime, and insurgent activity in the context of Empire in the United States today. Of this report's many weaknesses, the greatest is its inadequacy as any sort of persuasive essay. We do not know very much about Ismaaiyl Brinsley, first of all, and all of what we have learned has been articulated once already by institutions with heavy ideological investments in popular myths and master narratives that firmly segregate principled political agents from sick and subaltern criminals. The radical left, who are familiar with being

---

1   FBI preliminary numbers. Full report forthcoming fall of 2015.

painted as insane and irrelevant, seem even more eager to pathologize Brinsley than the mainstream news media. In addition to fielding limited information, we acknowledge that our readers almost certainly have a comparatively heavy ideological investment in their analysis of war and policing, and especially in the role of law enforcement as it stands in relation to peoples' movements, capital, and the state.

For ease of reference, we are informed by Hardt and Negri's *Empire* and its sequels because they situate war and policing as the ontological foundation of contemporary politics, rather than war as a distinct state of exception to peacetime, or policing as an operation distinct from warfare. As they put it, what "is specific to our [post-modernist] era... is that war has passed from the final element of the sequences of power—lethal force as a last resort—to the first and primary element, the foundation of politics itself... The constant and coordinated application of violence... becomes the necessary condition for the functioning of discipline and control." While we agree with Hardt and Negri's assessment that war has "become virtually indistinguishable from police activity," it is not our intent to make this argument for them.

An ontology of war encourages us to focus on what little we do know about the material dynamics of conflict surrounding Brinsley's attack because Brinsley effected a substantial disruption of the constant and coordinated application of violence in an American metropolis. Like occupation troops abroad, who are tasked with everyday securing Western interests in the midst of a hostile general population, police forces in American cities are responsible for applying coordinated violence to deviant or minority populations, either through containment policing, profiling, or more involved operations like slum clearance or—or as it is known nowadays—gentrification.[2]

An ontology of war is accompanied by a transition from inter-national defensive warfare to supra-national global security. This transition

2　Short Circuit: Toward an Anarchist Approach to Gentrification

supposes that our lives are shaped less by violent efforts to preserve the status quo, and more so by the tendency of warfare to produce our worlds instead of just destroying them. "Both within and outside the nation, then, the proponents of security require more than simply conserving the present order… Security requires rather actively and constantly *shaping the environment through military and/or police activity*. Only an actively shaped world is a secure world." We consider Security to be the conceptual opposite of Insurrection. Security supposes determination and predictability whereas Insurrection predicts the absence thereof. Brinsley's attack generated a unique response from the NYPD as a discreet entity, but it resonates more widely as an attack which threatens every Western city's reliance on the everyday activity of municipal police departments to shape and secure their environments for production and capital circulation.

Ismaaiyl Brinsley

"The rise of Empire is the end of national conflict, the "enemy" now, whoever he is, can no longer be ideological or national. The enemy now must be understood as a kind of criminal, as someone who represents a threat not to a political system or a nation but to the law… the "enemy" is simultaneously "banalized" (reduced to an object of routine police repression) and absolutized (as the Enemy, an absolute threat to the ethical order)"
—Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire*

On December 23rd of 2014, Ferguson Action wrote that "a troubled young man who began his day by attempting to kill his ex-partner, shot two officers and then killed himself has nothing to do with a broad non-violent movement for change" as part of a communique affirming the continuation of movement activities and decrying the police union's attempts to blame the #BLM movement for inspiring the murder of two police officers

in NYC. It was signed by 20 movement organizations. Mainstream presses take a similar angle with regard to Ismaaiyl Brinsley, press releases have included reports that the cop killer is alternatively, or consecutively, Muslim (re: an Islamist or terrorist), "mentally-challenged," a gang member, a career criminal and suicidal, in attempts to distance him from the #BLM movement and society as a whole. His own family is quoted as describing him as estranged and in need of "help," presumably psychosocial support from the justice systems of Ohio and Georgia, where he served time in prison. He is an aberration, construed as a risk to be managed both by self-described "non-violent movements" and the violent authorities they oppose. He is not a part of any movement. He is pathologically deviant from- and dangerous to—a status quo which assimilates progressive nonviolent critique of its institutions into itself.

In spite of this double exclusion, Brinsley's memory has been afforded many words of support and gestures of solidarity, from individuals on social media, from participants in demonstrations, and from copycat killers and imitators, but organizations cannot express support for him, or even publicly reflect on his actions without fear, or assurance, that they would experience retaliation for his attack or future attacks on police. As a result, presses and spokespersons from all sides take care to avoid drawing lines between Brinsley's attack and the #BLM movement. Neither authorities nor movement organizers are willing to acknowledge that Brinsley's actions might have been motivated by the #BLM movement. For the authorities, this is a discursive attempt to discourage copycat cop-killers; For movement organizers, it may be an attempt to maintain the illusion of control over a decentralized movement by refusing to acknowledge that violent attacks can logically follow from nonviolent protest.

Brinsley faces several layers of exclusion and estrangement even after his actions have been condemned as criminal and immoral. First, the mainstream media denies him the opportunity to have acted purposefully by pathologizing his person and ignoring any justifications for his actions.

Second, movement organizers denounce his actions as anti-social and aberrant to progress. Third, the events that he catalyzed are captured by the NYC police union (Police Benevolent Association or PBA) and the media as part of a localized political power struggle between the PBA and New York City Hall, one which is largely irrelevant to the material dynamics of conflict between poor people and the authorities that exist in American cities today. The ISIW's business is to articulate and reflect on those dynamics when they become apparent in American cities as much as in the material dynamics of conflict in the Middle East and North Africa. We believe that the underlying dynamics of conflict between poor communities, State actors, social movements, policing and the prison- and military-industrial complexes have become more apparent in the wake of Brinsley's attack in spite of the reluctance of institutions closest to the center of the conflict to acknowledge them.

Movement leaders and the authorities would like us to believe four things: that Brinsley's actions were antithetical to progressive social change; that the ongoing conflict around policing is between social movements and political authorities—most often political figures, and public policy-makers; that Brinsley was anti-social—in its broadest and most consequential ways; and that he exhibited signs of madness which drove him to attack irrationally, that we should (perhaps) sympathize with his afflictions but resist identifying with his subject position.

We are here to take quite-unpopular positions, and ones which are mostly absent from analysis of the Brinsley attack. First, Brinsley's attack effected the most substantial disruption in the coordinated oppression of minority Americans by the authorities in decades. Second, the narrative of social movements coming into conflict with political authorities by way of the police does not accurately describe the dynamics of conflict between poor people and the police. Third, that anti-social behavior should be expected and, to some degree, appreciated as a desperate attempt to throw off the shackles of an oppressive and cannibalizing social body. Fourth, that Brinsley's so-called madnesses, pathologies, and afflictions

are anything but unusual and—as such—are more recognizable as an inventory of the daily struggles of many of the subaltern Black men who compose a fair percentage of those who resist the good health and self care of petty-bourgeois hegemony. Our business is not to determine if Brinsley was or was not a part of #BLM, nor to judge his choices as right or wrong. It should be made clear, however, that we consider #BLM to be one part of the dynamics of conflict between people of color and the police, and not vice versa.

ATTACK

"…any member of the population could be a guerrilla fighter, and the attack can come from anywhere with unknown means. Guerrillas thus force the dominant military power to live in a state of perpetual parannoia. The dominant power in such an asymmetrical conflict must adopt counterinsurgency strategies that seek not only to defeat the enemy through military means but also to control it with social, political, ideological, and psychological weapons."

—Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*

What we know about Brinsley's attack is that he argued with his girlfriend or ex-girlfriend earlier that day near Baltimore, and ended the argument by shooting her in the abdomen. He posted to twitter that he was going to "put wings on pigs" in retaliation for the deaths of Mike Brown and Eric Garner. Then he moved to Brooklyn, NYC, and encouraged two pedestrians to follow him on Twitter. Later that night he fatally attacked two police officers sitting in their patrol car. He left the scene and was found dead in a nearby subway station—the result of a self-inflicted gun shot wound.

His attack was unlike most attacks that result in police fatalities. He was not cornered or confronted by police directly. He did not confront

them in any "meaningful" or symbolic way before showing his cards. He did not provide a manifesto or formal communique. He made no serious attempt to evade police capture. His attack was not "organized," either in concert with a cell, gang, or other coordinated body, nor does there appear to have been substantial planning preceding it. He traveled relatively far from home. He made no demands that we know at the time of this writing. He espoused no ideology that we know of at the time of this writing, except that his actions were in retaliation for the killings of Mike Brown and Eric Garner.[3]

Of course we don't know any details regarding what life experiences influenced his decision to act that night, and no person or organization that we know of is taking responsibility or offering insight. This may be because those parties most invested in shaping the discourse around reform of police and police impunity have nothing to gain, and a great deal to lose, by sharing any information that contradicts his characterization as a mad belligerent. We suspect that he elected to travel far from home in order to mitigate police retaliation felt by his friends and support people in Baltimore.

It's unclear if his actions were "suicidal" in the sense of a suicide bombing or frontal assault against the police. It is likely that he did commit suicide, but his announcements on Twitter leave us ambivalent with regard to his intentions. It is unlikely, for example, that he would announce his intentions if he expected to survive, but it is also unlikely that he would encourage pedestrians to follow him on Twitter if he didn't expect to make at least one more post. One salient possibility is that he expected to escape the scene by blending into subway traffic, but didn't anticipate that the authorities would be able to freeze the trains as quickly as they were able to.

---

3   The New York Times: Two Officers, Ambushed, are Killed in Brooklyn. 21 December 2014, pA1. URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/nyregion/two-police-officers-shot-in-their-patrol-car-in-brooklyn.html?_r=0

RESPONSE

In response to the attack the NYPD and the PBA of NYC have been outspoken and prolific in their communications with the public, but the immediate and ongoing logistical responses from beat cops have been relatively simple. The discursive responses are not to be disregarded but, in this case, as in many cases, discursive production may work to obfuscate the material dynamics of conflict rather than elucidate them. We must understand the public statements of the authorities as operations performed toward a strategic end rather than expressions of genuine sentiment or collective emotion.

First, before the attack, the Baltimore PD was notified by more than one of Brinsley's Twitter[4] followers of his intentions. The Baltimore PD released a regional advisory and the NYPD issued an APB containing a description of Brinsley and urging officers to take extra precautions until he was apprehended.

After the attack we know that the NYPD went on "strike"—officers declined to pursue broken windows citations, quality of life infractions, traffic stops, public housing walk-throughs, stop and frisk stops, and other forms of wide-net interpolation and processing of petty crimes, specifically in poor neighborhoods. A more telling component of the strike, however, is that the NYPD refused to respond to any call with fewer than two squad cars each occupied with two officers. This means that the NYPD's capacity to answer calls of any nature has been cut in half, as LEOs are traveling in heavier concentration to deter further attacks against them by maintaining their ability to call for backup and return fire.

It is possible that the NYPD expected the city to descend into chaos following the announcement of their strike, which would have presented them with incredible leverage over city hall and the general public,

4　Some accounts say Twitter, some say Instagram.

but nothing of the sort occurred.[5] Instead, the NYPD responded to the attack the only way that they could, by limiting the vulnerability of the perceived targets (all LEOs) to an unknown and widely distributed threat (people with grievances against the police).

There are at least three things happening here, and their conflation affords us an inadequate analysis for understanding police tactics and insurrection in NYC. If we can sort the responses of LEOs in the aftermath of Brinsley's attack, we can see more clearly which responses present as the maneuvering of an occupying army, which we will refer to as the NYPD "tactical" response, the political jockeying of the police union, and the infighting between the heavy concentration of law enforcement agencies on the East coast. We are most interested in the tactical response of the NYPD, because it is the tactical response which most directly affects the lived experience of people on the ground, it is the least analyzed, and it is the only arena for speaking directly to the possibility of producing police withdrawal—or retreat—from our lives.

POLICE AND POLICING

"What is distinctive and new about the claim that politics is the continuation of war is that it refers to power in its normal functioning, everywhere and always, outside and within each society... This war brings death but also, paradoxically, must produce life... daily life and the normal functioning of power has been permeated with the threat and violence of warfare."

—Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*

While we are always tempted to dissolve beat cops into an abstract conception of Policing as a category, here we are referring to a police department, the NYPD, and to other municipal police departments as distinct from

---

5   Police strikes do not result in a descent into chaos. Wikipedia carries a relatively thorough list of police union strikes for further reading under the entry "Police Strike."

other law enforcement agencies, military units, parole officers, social workers, psychiatrists, and PEAK teachers. We will situate the NYPD in a context of global security and productive warfare but only after establishing a few things about its organization and orientation.

Regardless of their supposed structural functions or imperatives, the first organizational imperative of any organization—like any organism—is to ensure its own survival; its continuity as an organization. The police are no exception; whether we consider LEOs to be civil servants or slave catchers; protectors or oppressors of populations. The responses of police departments to the murder of police officers are motivated by political conflict only after concerns of self-preservation, shared interests, and objectives have been exhausted.

The strongest predictor of how a police department will react to an attack on an officer is the nature of the threat to their lives. Discursive and political operations follow from material dynamics, not vice versa. A live threat that has not been neutralized, of course, captures the full attention of a police department, and this department's first priority will be to neutralize the threat and, until the threat is neutralized, insulate themselves from attack. While this might sound too obvious for words, police departments have developed the capacity to act with impunity and in their own self-interest as a result of generations of maneuvering and capacity building, often to resist liberal progressive attempts to bring them into the service of minority American people. That the full mobilization of multiple law enforcement bodies toward the elimination of a single threat who is only a threat to police officers and not the public seems normal belies the degree to which police departments have successfully maneuvered themselves into a position of operating with a great deal of autonomy from political authorities. Cops have always traded other people's freedom for pay, and rhetorical attempts to brand them as free men at the service of the American people barely blur Machiavelli's characterization of the mercenaries and auxiliaries who "have no other attraction or reason for keeping the field than a trifle of stipend…" Their

power is amplified by an ontology of war that positions police departments as an integral part of the constructive processes that shape docile subjects in American cities, a responsibility that many municipal police departments resent, as we'll discuss later.

THREAT STATUS

In the case of a live threat, we're reminded in recent years of officer Christopher Dorner (2013), Eric Frein (2014), Christopher Montfort (2009), and James Boulware (2015). All four were in response to attacks perpetrated by individuals with grievances against the police. All four produced manhunts; some produced civilian casualties. All generated enormous expenses, collateral damage, and a substantial disruption of everyday policing for their duration. In Dorner's case the entire LAPD and many proximate law enforcement agencies worked around the clock for over a week to find and eliminate him. Eric Frein's attack was met with at least 1000 officers for about seven weeks. Boulware captured the full attention of the Dallas police the night of his attack until they ended negotiations by shooting him in the chest. Montfort was shot and paralyzed when he brandished a weapon at officers investigating a lead on his vehicle. Brinsley's attack did not produce a manhunt; he was found dead shortly after his attack.

For a state-sponsored military unit engaged in asymmetrical warfare, exposure does not refer to detachment troups' exposure to the elements, but to a threat that is mostly unseen, whose survival depends on its ability to choose when and how it is exposed to hostile forces. Guerilla armies hiding in rural regions of northern India or southern Mexico learn to live off of the land and coordinate near constant movement of fire teams and support systems. Urban combatants blend in to civilian life and present as a hostile threat only when the circumstances and terrain are heavily in their favor. Because of the difficulty associated with rooting out and

neutralizing every hostile threat within an unfriendly general population, military units engaged in security operations focus on limiting exposure to hostile threats and maximizing *force protection*: their ability to preserve their fighting potential. All of the police responses used as examples under the preceding heading of "threat status" increased LEOs exposure to the threat (Dorner, Boulware, Montfort or Frein), but only because the threat was at large. For a military unit involved in asymmetrical warfare, the only thing worse than entering the line of fire is allowing a threat to relocate and strike again.

Manhunts consume inordinate amounts of resources for occupation troops, by measure of money or man-hours they are on another order entirely from the resources deployed against them. A police force must coordinate ground troops with aerial observation, armored vehicles, and intelligence operatives under a central command, as well as solicit leads and tips from the public by offering cash prizes and disrupt patterns of everyday life in affected areas with barricades, checkpoints, walk-throughs, interrogations, and intimidation tactics. Recall that these individuals were not threats to citizens, but rather were expressly committed to harming exclusively police officers.

Another crucial piece of actionable intelligence for the police is whether the threat is isolated to an individual or shared by a group. Dorner, Frein, Montfort, and Boulware, for instance, all acted alone, they were each, individually, the threat at large, and once they were neutralized policing could resume as usual. Like Brinsley, they carried grievances that are shared by many Americans, but they acted alone. The crucial difference between Brinsley and our other examples, is that he referenced Eric Garner and Mike Brown in his social media, and ensured that his actions would be considered as taking sides in a conflict "They take one of ours. Let's take two of theirs" (emphasis added). In this way, Brinsley's attack falls into the same category of threat as a revolutionary cell who appeals to a real or imagined population of comrades or sympathizers, except, unlike most rebel

communiques, Brinsley's message was echoed by thousands of people over social media.

Another determining factor is the legibility of the threat, whether motive and impetus can be defined, whether a profile of the assailant can be constructed and analyzed. If a threat can be defined as an individual or an organization, the response to that threat will be against an individual or an organization. When the only intelligence available to the police is the neighborhood in which an attack occurred, responses to police murder find tactical precedent in the play book assigned first to regressive forms of colonial rule, that is that *the colonizer's retribution is always ten times as severe as the oppressed people's attack.* For this reason we are compelled to posit that Brinsley may have elected to travel from Baltimore to NYC precisely to mitigate the severity of the retribution that people in his Baltimore neighborhood would face.

When an assailant appears to have attacked as one of a people or community, the police response will be against the culture or community. This dynamic of conflict is ubiquitous in colonies in conflict with their indigenous populations, apartheid states in conflict with oppressed populations, and black neighborhoods in conflict with the police or other white supremacist bodies in the USA. The logic is one of breaking the spirit of populations, to make it by some extension unethical and suicidal for any person or people to attack the occupying force because any attack will return ten-fold the misery and suffering upon the general population.

When a threat is perceived as being endemic to a population or circumstance, many tasks of policing fall to the legislative, technocratic, and political spheres, where politics continue the war by other means. This is not unlike a progressive critique of the drug war and mass incarceration. But we do not mean that legislation, technology, and politics are oppressive to minority groups, we mean that they perform operations to produce docile subjects by continually constructing hierarchies through violent intervention in everyday life. We consider a municipal

police department like the NYPD to be performing a function that parallels that of occupation soldiers engaged in projects of nation-building abroad, in abstract terms: the production of docile bodies and populations out of subjects who are potentially hostile to their assimilation into late capitalist modes of production. The production of docile bodies is far less romantic than the popularized notion of "winning hearts and minds" in the publications of military strategists and think tanks. Hardt and Negri cherry pick the term "full-spectrum dominance" from the Rand Corporation to describe the tendency of effective counterinsurgency to rely not only on negative techniques like assassination and violent intervention, but "positive" techniques to coercively change the enemy's behavior. "Counterinsurgency, in other words, must not destroy the environment of insurgency but rather create and control the environment." (Multitude, p58) The American metropolis is not an exception to this rule, in fact, it has practiced implementing this rule for generations. What better examples of productive warfare can be found than the construction of the project towers in Chicago and the containment of their residents or the involvement of police advisors in every phase of the contemporary gentrification process? Intensive and careful policing is necessary to protect the investments of the financiers in gentrifying neighborhoods just the same as military intervention is often needed to secure entire regions of the world for resource extraction as well as industrial or agricultural investment.

The components of full spectrum warfare are intended to prevent attacks like Brinsley's, and for the most part they do. Assassinations of police officers are rare. LEOs are much more likely to die accidentally than in combat with a suspect or assailant. "Unprovoked" attacks on police are even less common. The positioning of various law enforcement agencies and their degrees of exposure produce different—and occasionally conflicting—tactical inclinations. It is enough to note, for now, that the police responses to other attacks on police do not include anything resembling a police strike, even though their perpetrators planned their

actions much more carefully than Brinsley apparently did, were better armed, more outspoken, and more dangerous than Brinsley was.

Analysis

This strike is a political maneuver against city hall as well as a tactical maneuver by the NYPD in response to Brinsley's attack.

Police strikes are not unheard of, but are usually genuine labor disputes with demands for better pay, funding or benefits. One police strike, from Milwaukee in 1981 was in response to the combination of an officer's murder and the "unsupportive" comments of a city official. Striking officers at that time chose to abandon their posts and close police stations rather than maximize their force protection. Several police strikes in the last few decades have incorporated financial limitations to reasonable force protection in their demands.

Common tactical responses to attacks on the police include grand juries (when the assailant is unknown but some amount of suspect profiling is assumed possible), manhunts (when the assailant is known and at large), cover up (when any press is bad press), task force infiltration and counter-attack (when the assailant is known to be or have been a member of some organization at odds with the police), and the regressive imperial model (grab anyone from the same neighborhood and punish them as though they attacked you). These and other responses are chosen according to the results of an agency's threat assessment, target assessment, and target vulnerability.

The tactical precedent for the NYPD's response does not come from another American police department, but from American occupying forces in Baghdad, from the Assad regime's forces in Damascus, from any occupying force's imperative to consolidate forces when it is overextended and focus on protecting primary transit corridors and supply routes from disruption by an unfriendly *general population*.

If we reassess what little we know about Brinsley's attack we can see the difficulty facing the NYPD, and the relevance of their tactical response:

Subject: Ismaaiyl Brinsley

Status: The assailant, Brinsley, is dead of a self-inflicted gun shot wound.

Organizational Affiliation: None. However, he expressed solidarity with Eric Garner and Mike Brown, both heavily publicized officer-involved deaths.

Background: The assailant's profile is lacking substantially in detail. His family members were distant, his friends hard to find, and several conflicting and unverifiable portraits of the assailant emerged. He served a series of sentences in various corrections and rehabilitation facilities. He may have lived in Brooklyn in his childhood. He chose his victims, apparently, opportunistically.

Action: Consolidate police capacity to project force along major thoroughfares. Advise all uniformed officers to minimize exposure to civilians, respond to calls only if a minimum of two cars and four officers are available. Stay alert and keep moving.

Law enforcement agencies follow relatively standardized templates for gathering information and producing intelligence in national security and inter-agency contexts. Agencies are expected to inventory threats, produce threat assessments, target assessments (the targets that LE anticipates the threat will pursue), and target vulnerability (both exposure to a threat and vulnerability to persuasion/coercion). Brinsley's case breaks any sophistication available to templates for intelligence gathering by introducing an unwieldy threat inventory that is not confined to a jurisdiction (remember that Brinsley traveled from Baltimore to NYC). This leaves the NYPD reliant on federal authorities and the authorities of other jurisdictions to warn them of threats to their personnel.

Brinsley's case also breaks a police force's expectation of producing a threat assessment. Brinsley had a record, certainly, but there are millions

of people with arrests living in the USA, and they all have reasons to hold grudges against the police. What's more, there are thousands of threats made against the police over social media that are never followed up. In the days following his attack, the FBI reported a "staggering" number of reported posts to social media that were considered direct threats on the lives of law enforcement. There are far too many to follow up on in person, although some agitators have—at great length—earned personal attention.[6]

We have already mentioned that the target assessment, being LEOs in general, is too broad for intelligence purposes. So we can understand the NYPD's response to Brinsley's attack as one which focused exclusively on target vulnerability, in this case the exposure of individual targets (LEOs) as they performed their duties.

Months before the attack, we know that officers of the NYPD and many police departments across the country lamented their orders to play "hands off" with street demonstrations against police murder. Those orders originated in Homeland Security national protocols generated in response to Occupy Wall Street demonstrations. The Department of Homeland Security, alarmed by the diverse public sympathy generated by spectacular confrontations between police and peaceful demonstrators across America, and especially in NYC, coordinated police attacks on OWS encampments and surveillance of agitators and organizers, while urging police departments to avoid direct confrontation whenever possible.

Even prior to Brinsley, local PDs begrudged their orders to play by those protocols. The emerging #BLM movement is and was directly hostile to them. Official movement organizers and spokespersons espoused relatively reformist demands like better police training and psychological evaluations, participants in #BLM accredited actions were almost as likely

---

6   Such as Jeremiah Perez of Colorado Springs who was arrested for threatening to kill LEOs and retired LEOs in retaliation for instances of police brutality in late 2014. http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/fbi-agents-track-online-threat-against-cops-to-military-veteran-in-colorado-with-help-from-google

to espouse radical and abolitionist stances in place of the party lines. The precedent had also been set for law-abiding demonstrations for the victims of police violence to set the stage for rioting and other large scale civil unrest.

As is often the case in a budding insurgency, ground troops or beat cops sense threats to the dynamics of the conflict they navigate before the authorities that oversee them. The #BLM movement has not led the police to behave badly because it is an ideological threat to policing and white supremacy, but because it is a material one, against their logistical capability to keep their troops safe in hostile territory. OWS threatened police patience with privileged dissent but, like most leftist movements, identified the police first as workers of the 99%, whereas #BLM identifies the police as murderers and white supremacists worthy of direct confrontation.

In short, there is conflict between political bodies that has intensified in the aftermath of Brinsley's attack, but these conflicts are not defined by a union acting in retribution against its bosses, but a militarized force requesting authorization to put down the only pseudo-organization to whom Brinsley's attack can be attributed: the #BLM demonstrators. Brinsley has exploited a key discrepancy between the perspective of NYPD occupation soldiers in NYC and the perspective of their nationally-coordinated command. Beat cops know and feel their exposure and have an imperative to scatter the movement, to suppress anti-police messages, the NYPD has an imperative to protect their officers and avoid escalation, and federal authorities are inclined to gather intelligence on movement organizers and draft contingency plans in the event that the #BLM movement continues to grow in number, or change in character.

In the broadest of strokes, the police kill and arrest criminals to control populations. Federal authorities are tasked with responding to threats to national stability and inter-state criminal activity. Federal authorities have developed sophisticated protocols for intervening in social movements (including COINTEL, the Miami Model, and Occupy Doctrine), just as

police departments have developed robust strategies for controlling populations (of which profiling and killing unarmed people is one component). It could be argued that much of the logic of global security follows from the tradition of policing poor communities in the USA, not vice versa, as supranational interests take on the practice of intensive policing and occupation around the globe. The deaths of two police officers is not a threat to national stability, but a decentralized movement against police officers might be.

What the police in NYC have sensed before federal authorities, is that this movement is one that is not only fomenting anger against the police, but articulating resistance to their presence as part of a widely distributed culture of resistance to the everyday shock troops of discipline on the home front of Empire. This happens in spite of movement spokespersons at this time, not because of them. So while Brinsley may have emerged from a blind spot to federal authorities, beat cops sensed the threat to their safety before his attack. The only target available to them is the #BLM movement, but federal orders forbid the police from putting down the movement demonstrations in any of the ways that come naturally to a colonizing force or regressive imperial power.

It is difficult to imagine amidst the stream of spectacular images of repurposed military equipment and assault weapons emerging from police attempts at repressing #BLM demonstrations, but the police have restrained themselves thus far. Chatter from LEOs out of uniform suggests that they would feel safer if the #BLM movement were routed, not tolerated. What we are seeing is not a merciless crackdown on the #BLM movement, but a class of municipal police departments torn between the imperatives of their discreet organizational form (a police department), the imperatives of white supremacist networks, and the demands made of them by Empire: to produce docile bodies out of dangerous classes of poor, oppressed, and dispossessed people. Of course these categories are not distinct, but we must understand that a police department has an imperative to avoid escalation of conflict because the potential for

retaliation against the police department includes every officer. Networks of white supremacists (which include LEOs), however, are out of uniform, and perform their attacks anonymously, so patterns of escalation can be asymmetrical and irregular, just like a guerrilla band.

The federal response to Brinsley's attack has not changed dramatically from their response to the #BLM movement in general. On social media, thousands of people have insinuated or made violent threats against the police or explicitly embraced the actions of Ismaaiyl as heroic, timely, and relevant in words as simple as those of Bassem Masri's internet-famous masked comrade: "You call him a terrorist, I call him a motherfucking hero."

The FBI has announced that they are "tracking" these threats to "evaluate the mental soundness" of the individuals who make them. Their presumption is that assassins consist of people who are on the edge with little to lose, and that the likelihood that a given individual will put such threats into practice is assessable through casual questioning or light interrogation. There is no threat profile of an assassin, not even a handful of profiles.

According to the Secret Service, who focus primarily on asset protection (like public figures) and preventative intelligence (like producing threat inventories), assassins and would-be assassins are notoriously impossible to profile. Assassination attempts are usually only thwarted when would-be assassins announce their intentions *and* demonstrate credible evidence that they are following through on their plans. If Brinsley had intended to plan and kill a police chief, perhaps he would have been monitored and stopped, after informants could demonstrate that he had both motive and means to follow through. But Brinsley said himself that any badge will do: "They take one of ours, lets take two of theirs."

Both sides, cops and organizers, are determined to convince us that Brinsley has nothing to do with the #BLM movement, and they're both obviously wrong. Brinsley did what he did, in part, because he was moved by the sentiments expressed by contemporary movements against police

impunity. He saw his actions, to some extent, as partisan soldiery—even if it is not perfectly clear to us whom he considers to be his friends (Black people? Poor Black people? The American people?) it is perfectly clear than he considers all police officers to be enemies. He wanted people to know what he was doing ahead of time, he even told random bystanders to follow him on Twitter minutes before killing Ramos and Liu; he knew his actions would be celebrated by some, if not all, of those who oppose the police. And they have.

What he might not have known is even more astounding. His actions were as effective as any four bullets in any peoples' movement on record. The NYPD "strike" means that quality of life for thousands of NYC residents immediately improved, and the prison industrial complex was starved of new inmates from within the city's jurisdiction. The Policemen's Benevolent Association (PBA) called for the slowdown allegedly in response to "lack of support" from Washington and City Hall in the Grand Jury proceedings regarding Eric Garner, but came in the immediate aftermath of Brinsley's actions. The PBA's line is that D'Blasio's lack of support encouraged Brinsley to go on the offensive, but Washington and City Hall, clearly, did not inspire Brinsley to kill those officers, but the movement against police impunity did.

The tactical response to Brinsley's attack has been a re-centering of force protection along major thoroughfares to minimize police exposure to civilians and protect everyday transit and commercial interests from significant disruption. That's it; and the opportunity afforded by the absence of uniformed police officers in the daily lives of New Yorkers is one way that an insurgent might measure the effectiveness of Brinsley's attack. The NYPD's withdrawal from their role in producing safe city streets through stop and frisk and broken windows, in particular, handed a profound degree of agency and potential autonomy back to the people of NYC.

. The political response to Brinsley's attack is the PBA "strike" and character assassination of Mayor D'Blasio. The strike was intended, ironically,

to demonstrate that the police union is above the law. This is not a new police tactic. Many police strikes on record are of police officers striking, and even wildcat striking, in defiance of legislation that precludes any essential public workers from going on strike. We should understand the strike not only as a public demonstration of force, but also as discursive cover for the tactical response to Brinsley's attack.

The third dynamic we wish to point out is between the heavy concentration law enforcement agencies on the East coast. Most of all, that the NYPD is supposed to adopt orders and protocols from federal authorities with regard to national security, including the movement against police murder, even if those orders do not take the safety of everyday officers as their first priority.

The threat of insurgency carries particular attributes that mark it as a unique challenge for any state and/or occupying force. Counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine is generally produced by western imperial powers abroad, but has become a primary preoccupation of domestic security operations as state powers have come to understand that uneven domestic development has left broad subsets of the population with shared grievances who refute the moral legitimacy of the State. The State recognizes that winning back the population's hearts and minds is an impossible task, but enjoys the depth of economic and social investment of its citizenry into their own oppression as well as the fruits of corporate imperialism abroad. To maintain control, the State instead seeks to distinguish between potential insurgents and the general population not by branding them as traitors, but by determining that those who resist (or who are accused of resisting) are mentally unsound.

The state, however, is not coextensive with its police departments. The NYPD has reacted to Brinsley's attack by establishing greater force protection, while federal authorities would have them maintain business as usual, albeit while on heightened alert. From the NYPD's perspective the loss of two officers to an assassin is an unacceptable

loss and demands retaliation. Retaliation, however, would entail circumventing federal advisories and oversight as well as risk inspiring further ambushes against their personnel. Just as the official positions of #BLM organizations take survival of movement organizations as their first priority, even while individuals affiliated with #BLM make dangerous and inflammatory utterances, so the NYPD must be against the escalation of conflict between demonstrators and the police, even though many police officers are inclined toward an escalation of conflict that would justify greater use of force against demonstrators.

In the past decade, agencies have been advised to shift tactics from traditional information collection (dragnet collection) to what the Department of Justice is calling "requirements based collection." Technically, local law enforcement agencies are subject to DOJ protocols, but many police unions are strong enough to effectively disregard DOJ demands. Federal funding is available to local police departments to assist in cybercrimes, surveillance, and coordinated intelligence gathering.

Efforts at coordination, however, appear to fall apart when exposure to hostile threats is as unevenly distributed as it is for beat cops and the #BLM movement. In the context of national security, The NYPD shoulders the dual responsibility of maintaining dragnet intelligence gathering (stop and frisk, traffic stops, running plates, quality of life infractions, etc) while also providing federal authorities with the basic criminal intelligence necessary for any of their requirements based collections to function, while also embodying the only realistic target available to a threat profile like Brinsley's, whose narrow profile matches the threat of at least thousands of Americans. Hardly the first line of defense, to the threat of insurrection, the police are expendable pawns compared to federal officers out of uniform who enjoy a relatively high degree of insulation from attack.

The promises of the post-9/11 Fusion Centers and Joint Terrorism Task Forces don't appear to be manifesting evenly for local police

departments. While immense resources have been reallocated to police departments, almost twice as many officers were killed in 2014 as 2013, and anger against the police does not appear to be subsiding. Neither do the resources allocated to local PDs seem to be meeting the challenge of protecting local police from threats.

Implications

"…counterinsurgency strategies often focus on… internal contradictions, trying to keep the different subjects separate and exacerbate their ideological differences in order to prevent a political recomposition. Often, but not always, the attempts to separate the various components of resistance follow the lines of class divisions."

—Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*

Is #BLM for police reform or for police abolition? This question has been posed countless times in the last year, but its answers come most often with hefty ideological support and little else. In the case of movement leaders this is understandable, as there is an immediate and obvious imperative to appear as benign and law-abiding as possible. For supporters, participants, and affiliates of #BLM accredited actions, however, there is a clear and present danger associated with attempting to answer this question: It doesn't matter what we think.

Police reform, as a strategic goal, is the establishment of control or leverage over police. Anything short of control is PR. In the case of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense that was called "community control of police" and assumed mostly-segregated black neighborhoods that were thoroughly organized and relatively autonomous. The Panthers demonstrated this level of organization through their social programs like free meals and educational initiatives. The semi-segregationist line of the BPP was supposed to be part of the party's insulation from

being declared an enemy of the state by white America. In any case, the State determined that this "reform" was, in fact, revolutionary in its implications, and founded the Federal Bureau of Investigation to successfully destroy the BPP. The precedent set by the BPP suggests that it will be more difficult to implement community control of police—the only true police reform—than to exorcise them from our lives altogether.

Furthermore, attempting to answer the reform/abolition question invites us to falsely and naively assume that we can demonstrate against police violence without becoming targets of police violence. Attempting to answer this question lets us assume that if we don't demand the abolition of all police departments, that we won't be held responsible for collectively wiggling the lynch-pin of our entire social order. Attempting to answer this question tosses #BLM's efforts into the dustbin of prefigurative politics, where reside those movements whose participants imagined that they could chart a route where there is no map. Attempting to answer this question leaves the leadership of the best-known nationwide anti-police movement arguing ideology at the dinner table while LEOs and white supremacists work through the night to plan how to dismantle the movement as quietly as possible.

Attempting to answer this question distracts from what we can determine about what is actually possible. There are several specters looming on the horizon that present themselves as imminent possibilities considering the dynamics of conflict we have observed thus far. The first is the promise of repression, the state will continue to attempt to manage the #BLM movement in the interest of national stability. The second is civil war—or the escalation of armed conflict between white supremacists (LEOs among them) and demonstrators. And the third is insurrection, or the proliferation of possibility by way of attacking the logistical capacity of police departments and law enforcement agencies to effectively coordinate their application of

violence and repression against the #BLM movement.[7]

These are only the abstract possibilities presented to us from historical example, of course. Two of them have ample representation from the state and white supremacists. The state is well versed in repressing Leninist movements, and is experimenting with new forms of repression directed at #BLM as a network enemy like Al Qaida. In the case of civil war, white supremacists have been stockpiling small arms and building networks with fighting potential for generations with a millenarian fascination with the coming "race war." This is mostly harmless and ideologically confused, but materially manifests as preparations to take up arms for the status quo and dominant military powers. The third possibility, the possibility of insurrection, is one whose component parts are less clear.

Interfering with police logistics can take many forms, and interfering with policing as a category invites more opportunity for conceptual back bending than we care to indulge in, here, but we believe basically that Hardt and Negri are correct insofar as they call for investigating which conceptual categories of insurrection and revolt are relevant to the end of opening possibilities for liberation.

Ismaaiyl Brinsley's attack has provided useful precedent for understanding the response of police departments to the politicized assassination of their officers. We do not mean to suggest that embracing assassination is the only path to liberation, or even that assassination is necessarily on that path. We do believe, however, that producing police withdrawal is an essential component of developing resistance to global capital, and

---

7   We do not consider revolution, in a Leninist sense, to be an imminent possibility given the sophistication of the state's instruments for dismantling progressive movements and the severely limited capacity of #BLM organizers to coordinate action or capture the attention of the populations they claim to speak for. Inversely, the rise of fascist political figures like Donald Trump should not be considered revolutionary, but rather an intensification of the repression that is already exercised by state authorities. For more on the relationship between insurrection and revolution, visit the writings of Clauswitz or Schmidt on partisan warfare. They both contend critically with the relationship between nationally unified revolutionary armies and "telluric" partisan forces that are tied to the land.

definitely *the* foundational aim of any movement against police murder. As such, #BLM must seriously consider the effects of various forms of violent attack on LEOs as possible tools in the battle against police violence, or of inspiring or valorizing such attacks as important discursive interventions in master narratives that determine that Brinsley's attack was irrelevant or antithetical to liberation.

This does not mean, necessarily, that public declarations of support for Brinsley are wise, but there are reasonable steps that can be taken toward acknowledging his struggle and sacrifice. Many onlookers, opponents and proponents alike, insinuate that #BLM has invented and owns the rights to resistance to police brutality and police murder. On the contrary, #BLM, like most forms of activism, has taken war and made a sport of it. This is effective insofar as Americans love sports even more than they love war, so even the simulation of conflict is effective at encouraging conflict, but there are important thresholds to activist organizing. The first is that activist organizing in many ways is reliant on the established social order to function effectively—sports have rules, and activism survives insofar as it plays by the rules of legality, of civil disobedience, and of nonviolence—and experience from around the world shows that oppressive rules must be broken in order to produce social change. The second threshold for activism is that activism, as a form of organizing for social change, has such a strong historical tradition of disillusionment and cooptation that most Americans, it would seem, "don't believe in demonstrating" or are otherwise averse to movement organizing. We think it is safe to assume that Brinsley was one of those disillusioned by the promises of activism and other theories of change that draw too heavily on classical revolutionary strategies and their counterparts from the civil rights movement. The war between poor people and the police is not impending, it is ongoing, and #BLM affiliates can be differentiated between those who are at war with the police, and those who are not, based on their willingness to consider whether Ismaaiyl Brinsley was their friend or their enemy; whether his life matters, too.

While there are severe risks associated with publicly proposing violent attacks on the police, it is also a serious tactical error to imagine that police and police sympathizers will ever make meaningful concessions to public opinion or movement pressure. Retaliation and repression have and will continue to occur. There is no feasible way for federal or state authorities to prevent more attacks like Brinsley's, so local police forces and white supremacists will continue to take matters into their own hands, especially if more attacks like Brinsley's occur. #BLM cannot control what people do in its name, but it can investigate the law enforcement tactics and patterns of escalation associated with suppressing their movement in order to make the knowledge of best practices and countermeasures as widely available as possible. Distributing the names, aliases, and appearances of known informants, and making regular and systematic local and federal FOIA requests on behalf of #BLM organizers and to learn about surveillance techniques are both examples of straightforward ways that participants can produce actionable intelligence for the movement. Developing the capability to monitor the communications of white supremacists, as well, will prove crucial to the ongoing safety of participants in #BLM demonstrations. Public knowledge of armed contingents at demonstrations, carrying openly or concealed, may deter armed attacks on public demonstrations, as well, even if it does little to protect participants outside of demonstrations.

Conclusions

"We need to look now from the other side and recognize the logic that determines the genealogy of forms of insurgency and revolt. This logic and this trajectory will help us recognize what are today and will be in the future the most powerful and most desirable organizational forms of rebellion and revolution."

—Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*

Insurgency is un-formed. It is qualified by a state of exception to the normal functioning of policing. It must be negotiated and discovered in context; it cannot be feigned or simulated. An unanticipated and violent assassination of NYPD personnel has had the effect of loosening control over poor neighborhoods in NYC, and may effect further disruptions in the effective policing of other cities. The #BLM movement's most powerful contribution to the true fighting potential of poor people of color in the United States may not be the construction of a broad-base non-violent movement for social change, but the sober assessment of what popular and subaltern resistance to police violence already exists, and the strategic articulation and amplification of the communiques of people like Brinsley as more than reactionary expressions of mental and social illness.

If there is a threat of insurrection associated with the #BLM movement, we do not have reason to believe that it is the threat of a #BLM guerrilla vanguard, or a carefully orchestrated #BLM terrorist attack. It is certainly not the threat of a decentralized network like #BLM building a revolutionary platform and taking state power. We believe, rather, that the insurgent possibility is closely connected to #BLM acknowledging Brinsley's logic, that he was more than a mad man, that his efforts showed promising results, and that his choice of tactics followed from a long and respected tradition of struggle for Black liberation that could include Robert F. Williams, Malcom X, and anyone who will consider that violent insurrection may follow from the impossibility of peaceful revolution. This is a discursive step to building a militant network to confront the authorities, and to match networks of white supremacists who would defend the status quo and intensify repression of Black and Brown communities. Civil war, of course, is a devastating possibility, but the entire #BLM movement is predicated on the refusal of police departments to value or protect the lives of Black and Brown people. Thus there is a case to be made for attempting to temper the escalation of violent confrontation, but not for delaying the implementation of strategies and tactics

that might produce police withdrawal and encouraging the development of militant networks. The options afforded to #BLM and communities of color are to shoulder the burden of police repression indefinitely, or to find ways to put the police on the defensive. Brinsley achieved that, so it is imperative that his tactics and logic be considered for their utility to the ongoing struggle between the police and minority communities today.

THE PARADOXES OF COUNTERINSURGENCY AND THE RISE OF THE ARMED INCLUSION

The Rise of Counter-Terrorism

With the confirmation hearings surrounding Chuck Hagel and John Brennan, as well as the leak of confidential Department of Justice legal findings, a lot of attention has been turned toward the extra-judicial flying death robot program, popularly known as drone strikes. Even a year ago the term 'secretive' would still have applied, but with these hearings, and before this the inception of the @dronestream Twitter feed, this program has been called into the open, and drawn all sorts of righteous criticism. Critisism of the drone programcomes immediately after the removal of gender restrictions for combat roles within the military, which was was proceeded by the removal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. These issues have been portrayed by the press as three of a series of isolated and unconnected shifts that the Department of Defense has made under the direction of the Obama administration. This reading of events misses the point; what we are witnessing is a fundamental shift in military mission, a complete restructuring of the role of the military—away from large scale

operations with large force footprints as in Iraq and Afghanistan—and the rise of the military as constant global security operation. This shift from centralized combat operations to a decentralized, indefinite mobilization of conflict is profoundly more disturbing that the isolated drone strike, which is merely a symptom of systematic changes within US military strategy.

The narrative of the global military, or the military as a force capable of projecting operations worldwide, is as old as the long range bomber and spy plane. However, while in the past the military could send B-2s anywhere within 24 hours flight time, and deploy large amounts of forces onto other continents, now this is no longer coupledwith the assumption of either strategic bombing campaigns or military invasions in the traditional sense. What has developed is a global strike capacity based on a succession of isolated strikes on single targets, without these strikes being necessarily concentrated geographically. This is a shift away from the concept of the expeditionary force, or the Air Force's global strike capacity, and into a concept of warfare that is constant, based in the ability to intervene in localized areas with quick reaction forces, backed by a constant global surveillance network of satellites and drones capable of flying for weeks on end. The era of the large scale, heavy commitment, is quickly waning, and the era of perpetual, total, war is quickly coming upon us.

January 2012 saw the release of a new Department of Defense strategic guidance document called "Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense", detailing the shift in US military force posture and the reconstruction of the military force itself. This document follows a previous series of modifications to US military force structure that began in the middle of the last decade, most specifically the "modulation" initiative which restructured large portions of the military along the lines of brigades that could deploy autonomously to various places around the world quickly, rather than larger divisions. Of primary importance are the eight modifications to strategic focus that are described in the

document itself, but of specific importance is the discussion of the focus on "irregular warfare" and the shift away from large scale stability and counterinsurgency operations. The intent is to structure campaigns that leave a "small force footprint", or operations in which the duration or the commitment is light, or can be carried out at distance, and which, if they involve any commitment of ground forces at all, involve coalition warfare and a quick transition to localized defense structures.

This is combined with a focus on "global security", or the projection of this force globally, on a constant basis. For this sort of global and constant projection of force to occur it is necessary for the military to move away from large concentrations of force in specific areas, such as Iraq, and into a more dispersed focus on things like Special Ops raids and drone surveillance and strikes. We have already seen this new force posture at work, not only in the drone strike , but also in the NATO operations in Libya, where the use of localized forces combined with NATO airstrikes, and in the French military operations in Mali, where French troops are working alongside Malian government forces in an operation that, as it increases in duration, theoretically will involve less and less French forces. These moves began to manifest with the Department of Defense discussions of the "military force drawdown", or the shrinking of the active duty military force, specifically the Army, by around 80,000 troops over the course of the next five to ten years.[1] The "drawdown" is being coupled with an increase in the pool of soldiers eligible for combat positions, specifically in Special Forces and Special Ops units, through the elimination of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and gender restrictions on combat roles, as well as a tightening of restrictions on fitness and aptitude; the attempt here is to build more highly specialized combat units that can deploy quickly and carry out raids, on military orders, around the world almost instantly.

It used to be that the military shied away from these "small wars", what was pejoratively referred to as "mootwahs" (MOOTW, or Military

---

1   Feickert, 2013: This report, titled "Army Drawdown and Restructuring: Background and Issues for Congress", gives a good, summarized, breakdown of the relatively undefined process of the military force drawdown.

Operations Other Than War), and were so poorly regarded that service in them was not even considered a combat tour till recently. This is a profound shift away from the large scale military that was structured to, supposedly, carry out large scale operations on two fronts, although that did not seem to really work out that well for them, as well as numerous smaller operations globally. This general structure had persisted ever since the end of the Cold War, and was based on a long held focus within the military on force concentration and firepower, as Powell termed it during the Gulf War (the first one), engagements through overwhelming force. In a short period of time the military has moved from a force that could deploy large numbers of troops, with high tech weapons, to a few places in the world, to one that is quickly being structured to carry out small-scale, globally projected, constant security operations, in as widely dispersed a way as possible. To understand this shift, and the roots of the shape of this new military structure, we have to go back to the middle of the last decade, when defense analysts, who tend to rush to the trend of the moment, were obsessed with another shift in military doctrine, the move into counterinsurgency.

In his recent book, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, Fred Kaplan exhaustively discusses the process in which American concepts of counterinsurgency developed and became incorporated into American military doctrine. There are three primary threads that are developed throughout the narrative descriptions in Kaplan's book. The first centers around the historical dynamics and interpersonal relationships that led to the doctrinal acceptance of counterinsurgency in the mid-200s, tracing this history back to the development of the Social Sciences School at West Point and the relationships that developed through both the institution itself and the graduates of the school, including Petraeus. The next primary thread is the life and connections of Petraeus himself. For those that may not know his name, David Petraeus, recent head of the CIA, was the driving force in the implementation of

counterinsurgency, in his roles as commander of operations in Iraq, CentCom[2], and then Afghanistan. This line of inquiry is specifically interesting now, in the wake of the adultery scandal that caused the fall of Petraeus as the head of the CIA in 2012. Thirdly, and this is the most hidden of these threads, Kaplan traces, through the history of development and implementation, the flaws and paradoxes of counterinsurgency as a whole, pointing to a series of historical inaccuracies in its theoretical development, as well as a series of paradoxes in its implementation. For as tempting as it would be to develop the biography of Petraeus, specifically after the scandals, which are still resonating within the military, this is, on a lot of levels, merely the narrative framework used by Kaplan to establish the other two, more tactically central, narratives. As such, I will not be focusing on this story of the rise and fall of Petraeus, this has already been written about ad nauseum and I do not wish to focus on the backroom intrigue and personal networks of connections, the histories of promotions and fights within the Department of Defense in this text, one can read Kaplan's book for more on that, and it is a fascinating history. Rather, I will focus on discussing, albeit briefly, the history of counterinsurgency and the ways that the rise, and fall, of counterinsurgency within the US military had led to the developments that are being talked about today.

THE PARADOXES OF COUNTERINSURGENCY

Before the end of World War II there had obviously been insurgencies and attempts to crush insurgencies, but these largely relied on total force, the complete elimination of populations and so on. We can see this in the colonialist approaches to insurgency where insurgents were hunted down and villages burned, with the result being mass death in frontal fighting, specifically after the advent of the Maxim gun and its role in the

---

2   US Central Command is based out of MacDill Air Force base in Tampa and has responsibility for all operations in the Middle East and Western Asia.

crushing of anti-British insurgencies in Africa.[3] These campaigns tended to achieve one of two things, either pushing an insurgency underground, as in Algeria, only to have it arise again, more prepared and stronger, or the total elimination of insurgent populations through forced resettlement or mass killing, as in British campaigns in Africa. Some of these experiences were replicated after the beginning of the fall of traditional imperialism in the wake of the Second World War, but, in the fallout from the war in Europe there was increasing focus on concepts of reconstruction and prevention of latent insurgencies, specifically by fanatical Nazis. But, even though there was this focus there were no skills within the military to actually carry out these tasks and difficulties persisted in Europe during the beginning of the post-War years. Due to a lack of training, military officers had little idea of how to administer space, to run bureaucracies, and how to fuse this with still latent military operations. In response to this lack of understanding of questions of economics, politics and sociological awareness, a general named George Lincoln began a push to start the Social Sciences School at West Point. Though this is not the place where the concept of counterinsurgency would be developed, it would set the stage, through its graduates, for the process that, 60 years later, would result in its rise to doctrinal prominence.[4]

The concept of counterinsurgency, in its post World War II usage, developed out of the experiences of a French officer named David Galula, who in 1946, was appointed to an embassy position in China during the height of the revolution. Through his time there he began to be fascinated with the structure of Maoist guerrilla warfare, in which, in large parts of the country, there were no frontal Communist forces, merely thousands of insurgents living in villages, unable to be identified visually, that would strike and disappear. He began to study this phenomena carefully,

3   Chivers, 2010: This text, *The Gun*, is a "social history" of the development of the AK-47, and by extension, the relationship between arms and the rise and fall of insurgencies. In this history we can also trace the history the the proliferation of insurgencies, through the proliferation of the weapon, and the differing approaches to insurgency and counterinsurgency since 1947.
4   Kaplan, 2013

even traveling to conflict zones, such as Malaya, to study the process of the suppression of uprisings that had become fused with the terrain of fighting, eventually volunteering for service in Algeria. While in Algeria he began a series of experiments in a small cluster of towns in the rural, mountainous parts of the country, where he embedded troops in the villages, using them to gather intelligence and carry on constant policing operations, which sometimes involved torture and raids, and saw insurgent activity drop dramatically. These experiences led to a book, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*,[5] where Galula argues that the key to crushing an insurgency is to fight a different sort of war, rather than attempting to just clear space, one must deprive insurgents from their primary basis of support, people themselves. This work is the first major work on counterinsurgency, and it heavily influenced FM 3-24,[6] the US Army and Marine's Counterinsurgency manual, published in 2006.

This separation of insurgents from their support logistics can be achieved through operations to separate insurgents from populations, both through military methods and civilian initiatives. The goal is to provide incentives to reconcile and cooperate, while separating and eliminating irreconcilable elements of an insurgency. These operations take on a wide variety of forms, and exist without a set doctrine, being portrayed, largely, as an attempt to read the dynamics of a situation, on as wide a plane as possible, and manipulate those dynamics to the advantage of occupying forces. However, there were darker sides to these campaigns, specifically the British campaign in Malaya. Here, rather than

---

5   Galula, 1964; In the book Galula runs through a series of discussions of Maoist insurgency, specifically focusing on guerrilla operations, and the ways in which revolutionary warfare relies on a concept developed by Clausewitz, the generation of an increasingly resistant medium, which amplifies friction in linear military forces, and insurgency as a non-linear, asymmetric, disorganizing dynamic, rather than relying on some nebulous concept of the "mass movement".

6.   Department of the Army, 2006; This manual was written under the supervision of General David Petraeus, with the help of John Nagl, David Kilcullen and others. It was later supplemented, in 2009 with manual number 3-24.2 Tactics in Counterinsurgency, to clear up some of the operationally vague direction in the original manual.

embedding troops among the people in a village, as Galula had done in Algeria, the British did something entirely different. They resettled everyone within the areas that the insurgents operated, into essentially concentration camps, took as many resources from the countryside as they could, taking them to the camps, and starved the insurgents, who died in the hundreds. Even in Galula's operations in Algeria the French troops in the experimental zones resorted to torture to derive information on insurgents through interrogations. Yet, through the development of US counterinsurgency both Malaya and Galula's writings were taken as influences. It was this focus on separating populations from insurgents, taken from Malaya, embedding oneself among populations, derived from Galula, and the new focus on "development", "nation-building" and economics developing in the Social Sciences School, that would eventually converge to create the American form of counterinsurgency, and its ultimate paradoxes.

The US military has not been specifically sympathetic to irregular conflicts, and spent most of the years after World War II focused on nuclear escalation, and the development of increasingly complex and automated weapon systems to fight the Soviet Union on the plains of Europe. For counterinsurgency to become part of American doctrine took a fundamental shock to that vision of warfare, which is highly linear and centralized, and these shocks came in the form of Vietnam and the Gulf War. The experience in Vietnam, if we follow the analysis of Harry Summers,[7] was filled with tactical victory, but ended in strategic defeat, largely through the inability of the US from preventing the insurgency from spreading, and catalyzed by the use of heavy firepower weapons, air strikes, raids and so on, that created a terrain that became almost completely saturated with conflict. As Kaplan explains there were early experiments in rudimentary counterinsurgency operations, through a program called CORDS, which only functioned for a short period of time, losing out to a vision of military operations steeped in the firepower-first

mentality fostered in the 1950s. But, with the loss in Vietnam, there was a rethinking of the commitment of American force into conflict zones. Rather than come to terms with the failure of the American military to prevent the spread of insurgencies through firepower, the military began to develop a doctrine of force commitment based completely on overwhelming force and concrete goals, a doctrine advanced by Colin Powell among others. Part of this doctrine was the Revolution in Military Affairs, in which the military began the development of many of the tools that are now standard in any Military Channel documentary, including the M1 Abrams Battle Tank, smart bombs, and early drones. As Kaplan explains, these weapon systems formed the core of the overwhelming force strategy that the military applied all the way through the Gulf War, and still form the basis of many of the tools used in contemporary counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism campaigns.

The situation changed dramatically with the fall of the Soviet Union, and the revelation that the war the military had been preparing for over the past 50 years was an increasingly obsolete concept. During the Gulf War something became clear to the low-level officers on the ground; due to the sheer magnitude of destruction exacted by American forces, and due to the collapse of Soviet support for client states, it was likely that in the future the US would be facing a different, more diffuse, adversary that would not be able to be defeated by firepower alone. Among others, this motivated John Nagl, who served as an officer in a tank brigade during the war, to begin to study the dynamics of insurgency, setting the theoretical stage for the introduction of counterinsurgency into the military establishment itself. The clearly overwhelming advantage on the level of firepower, and the new global dominance of US weaponry and force projection, began to quickly fragment warfare increasingly into "small wars", in which many of the future advocates of counterinsurgency, including Petraeus, began to gain their first experiences in conflict. Following the Gulf War the US engaged in a series of "small wars", including Bosnia and others, that began to form the basis of a multilayered approach, that

would eventually solidify into counterinsurgency doctrine. However, it took another 10 years, and a series of military failures, before this doctrine was made central to US force training and mission.

When the War in Iraq began, Kaplan explains, counterinsurgency was beginning to gain traction within military circles, but had not yet made its way into the core of military doctrine. When the invasion of Iraq occurred Rumsfeld, among others, did not have, what in military parlance is called, a Phase IV plan, or a plan for stabilization and withdrawal; it was just assumed that military forces would be unnecessary after six months. But, through the actions of the Coalition Provisional Authority, specifically the disbanding of the military which threw thousands out of work, an insurgency began to gain momentum with no plan to prevent or combat this new dynamic. At this point Petraeus was in command of the 101st Airborne Division, which was assigned to police the areas in and around Mosul after the main-force invasion. These operations began calmly enough, as one of a small series of attempts at "reconstruction", but quickly devolved when the insurgency began. Petraeus quickly began to implement counterinsurgency operations, of which he had been an early advocate, and constructed a wall around the city, established patrol bases in neighborhoods, and began using money, raided from Baath regime coffers, to begin to fund initiatives begun by sympathetic elements of the local population. However, this never really gained ground, and completely devolved after the 101st was rotated out after a their year long combat tour. This story typifies the experiences of US commanders who would attempt to implement counterinsurgency, because the Department of Defense was under orders by Rumsfeld to not even acknowledge an insurgency was occurring, a situation that remained the case till his replacement in 2005; new commanders, with traditional mentalities would rotate in, and the process would completely devolve. This remained the case till counterinsurgency sympathizers were appointed to high level positions within the Department of Defense, with Petraeus eventually becoming the head of the Combined Arms Center,

which sets all US military doctrine, controls educational programs and training and writes manuals, including the Counterinsurgency Manual, and then his appointment to run operations in Iraq, then CentCom, and finally Afghanistan.

Kaplan explains that, aside from this nice linear history, counterinsurgency operations rose to prominence in a specific situation, namely the strategic failures of Bush administration policy, and structured the factors in its own eclipse with the inauguration of the Obama administration. This rise, and fall, were primarily perpetuated by two necessities of counterinsurgency. Firstly, these policies only arose after troop surges in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Only at the point where there were large commitments of extra troops to invade and saturate areas were these operations able to perpetuate, and that meant the structure of larger force footprints, which increased the role of the occupier. These large footprints forced the US to engage in operations for longer periods of time, and as a result, concentrating force in single locations of priority, spreading conflict outside of zones where these concentrations existed, specifically into Pakistan, the Yemen and Northern Africa. Secondly, these surges, and the counterinsurgency doctrine they were based on, increasingly became nebulous concepts of occupation without an end point, which began to erode morale and political support. The sheer cost, in material supplies and death, eroded support for the wars over time, even more than had been the case before, and generated the political conditions for a necessary shift in strategy.

On top of these strategic costs, Kaplan points to a series of inaccuracies in the development of US counterinsurgency strategy that contributed to its inevitable failure, and paved the way for the shift into counter-terrorism. Specifically, the role of the occupier, and its relationship to civil authorities was ignored. In the example of Malaya, the British had been occupying it as a colony for some time, and were the civil authorities, avoiding the problem that the US later ran up against in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the inability of recently installed governments to

be deferent to US strategy, and actions they took which contributed to the dynamics of insurgency; with Maliki this included being complicit in ethnic cleansing, and with Karzai, he was directly benefiting from the corruption that was driving a lot of fighters into Taliban ranks. Secondly, in the discussion of insurgency within US military thought, specifically during the process of writing the Counterinsurgency manual and after, the drive to make counterinsurgency part of official doctrine began to harden into a dogmatic concept of a commonality among insurgencies, ignoring their particularities and imposing a process through which to train and equip soldiers to carry out counterinsurgency operations. Though these shortcomings are dramatically important, the discussion of the problems of counterinsurgency does not go far enough. What was experienced was not just a problem on the doctrinal level, they were the product of a fundamental paradox at the heart of counterinsurgency.

The insurgency, through its nebulousness, creates what Clausewitz calls a resistant terrain, or a terrain in which movements meet more or less resistance in their sheer spatial aspects. Insurgencies are effective to the degree that they come to expand the terrain and speed of conflict, causing an increase in conflict, and spreading out occupying forces. They are disorganizing forces, which stretch the logistical capacity of the occupying forces to the point of rupture, where their capacity to contain crisis breaks down, hence Mao's discussion of the guerrilla being outside of decisive confrontation, and engaging in war as a duration. It was noted in Iraq, for example, that the strategy of patrols, or the strategy of embedding forces in towns, were disrupted by the first roadside bomb, not the scale of casualties in a campaign of bombing. In this first attack the ability to be certain of the contingencies of movement were eliminated, forcing soldiers to take defensive stances, approach people with caution, and retreat to increasingly fortified sanctuaries, farther and farther from the very towns that they were attempting to co-opt away from insurgency. Galula points out that the difficulty of counterinsurgency is that occupying forces have to protect everywhere, all the time, while insurgents can

strike anywhere at any time. At the point of the first attack the possibility of insurgent action becomes total, and the insurgency begins to take on a spatial element; it cannot be identified, and therefore can be anywhere. Counterinsurgency operations have to attempt to project across the entirety of time and space, as a constant security operation, or an action of prevention. In concepts of security one is attempting to operate to prevent something that has not occurred, meaning that this operation has to cover all time, all space.

Insurgencies become the terrain, fuse into space itself, and counterinsurgency is an attempt to reconstruct the dynamics of this space in order to facilitate a de-escalation of conflict. Though this process, in its 21st Century manifestation, puts forward a relatively benign sounding rhetoric, even soliciting feedback and participation from human rights organizations, this reconstruction of space is far from a passive process; it is the abrupt and forceful seizing of space and reconstruction of space by an occupying element. It is this force, this total occupation, which generates the paradox in counterinsurgency. As in Mosul, or in Baghdad, where walls were constructed, literally, to separate zones of control from zones out of control, or in the increasing surveillance, interrogation, raids and the presence of armed occupiers on city streets, counterinsurgency still involves occupation and the deployment of force. The necessity of counterinsurgency arises at the point where insurgencies take on a speed and visibility, and involve a deployment into space, at the point where the insurgency becomes effective. This means that the deployment into space is necessarily a deployment into a terrain that is more resistant, characterized by a higher concentration of conflict, which both increases at the point where occupying forces attempt to move through space, as well as providing a hindrance to that movement. Therefore, to move at all, occupying forces generate conflict, even though the process of counterinsurgency is premised on decelerating conflict to whatever degree possible. As mentioned earlier, this function in a completely smooth, conceptual, space well, but is immediately disrupted at the point

of the first attack, where defense, and thus deploying conflict into space becomes the primary priority.

We can see this in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In a space generally devoid of concentrated conflict US forces were able to operate in a generally hands-off way, in Mosul this was the initial phase after the invasion. But, as the insurgency came into the open, and attacks began to occur, US forces quickly shifted into a defensive posture that involved deploying conflict into space. In Mosul this process began with the building of a wall around the city, then moved into increased patrols, finally culminating in the shooting of demonstrators by Iraqi police and then the escalation into street fighting between US forces and insurgents. To hold space for any period of time involves attempting to literally stop history from proceeding, to attempt to form the possibilities of existence through incentives and force. Paradoxically, this then becomes an attempt to end conflict through the deployment of conflict, to decelerate conflict by accelerating conflict. This deceleration involves combating the insurgency, or the forces which are generating other political possibilities. As we saw in Iraq, this quickly devolved into raids on houses, an increased focus on means to limit movement such as walls and checkpoints, mass arrests and torture during interrogations. The difficulty presented by counterinsurgency involves the concentration of force in space, preventing wide ranging operations without increasing the amount of troops on the ground, and thus the acceleration of conflict.

It is no surprise, then, that Petraeus found a common set of operations that could account for the trajectories of both counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism, a method he attempted to employ while in command of ISAF[8] but this was a balance that would never last. Counterinsurgency provided the concentrated focus on specific spaces while counter-terrorism operations, focused on raids and individual strikes but not holding space, provided the reach to expand the deployment of force. But, in focusing on the deployment of force, which counter-terrorism does, conflict increases

---

8   ISAF stands for the International Security Assistance Force, and is the official name of NATO forces in Afghanistan

in its density with increasing speed. As houses are bombed, Special Ops raids occur, Hellfire missiles are fired at dwellings, and people are picked up and interrogated to derive the information necessary to target these operations, the tension on the ground is amplified, the insurgency grows, and troops on the ground shift into an even more defensive posture. This combines with the large footprint that characterize counterinsurgency operations; with the necessity of staying in a single space for long periods of time, and the need for supplies, bases have to be constructed, supply depots have to operate, roads have to be secured, and all of this provides static targets for attack, and thus zones of defense.

As this conflict increases we see the development of a process by which the prison leaves its walls. For counterinsurgency to function forces need to be in place for a period of time, and to combat an insurgency involves the monitoring of space and the slowing down of the possibilities and speed of movement. Cameras proliferate, checkpoints proliferate, patrols proliferate and the prison moves onto the street. As Eyal Weizman explains in *Hollowland*,[9] this defensive space of security tends, quickly, toward a total control over space and movement, with information gathering moving to a point of total surveillance and movement tending towards a trajectory of cessation. We even see this on our own streets, where the development of community policing involves both the development of community snitch squads, also known as Neighborhood Watch, which destroy the trust that holds communities together, with the "noncompliant" communities being addressed through a combination of saturation policing and increased surveillance.

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND ARMED INCLUSION

Counter-terrorism is the attempt to resolve the central paradox of counterinsurgency, the attempt to decelerate conflict through the deployment

---

9   Weizman, 2007

of large amounts of troops in saturation operations. With the political failures of Bush administration policy, and the drop in support for the wars, Obama was elected to "end the wars", a process that quickly became the institutionalization of counter-terrorism doctrine. This strategic set is composed of a combination of intelligence, air power and Special Ops, which attempts to identify and eliminate specific targets through strikes that are not structured to hold space, but, rather are structured to move through space with speed and stealth. The argument is that counter-terrorism operations evacuate the battlefield almost entirely, favoring small scale raids and drone strikes, rather than traditional military force operations. As a result, forces can strike from distance, in low concentration, from friendly space without the need to maintain supply lines and forward operating bases. In doing so, the possibility of being counter-attacked is limited, but at the same time the ability to hold space is eliminate completely. This quickly becomes war at a removal, where the sheer force and coverage of operations in an area act as a deterrent.

We can, however, already take a glimpse into the tactical issues with this strategy, and the continued possibility for resistance in the impossibility of its totality. Early on in the invasion of Afghanistan, before the main force invasion, Special Ops troops and CIA were on the ground, largely to spot out targets for bombing runs and working with localized forces. This immediately ran into problems. Firstly, local forces tended to be unreliable, disloyal and outside of the chain of command, making them difficult to coordinate with, especially when operations moved into Tora Bora and the local forces generally refused to risk their lives to achieve American objectives. Secondly, this structure of air-strikes was still based on sight and involved a time lag; forward spotters would spot a target, upload the data to a drone flying overhead, which would beam it to a base in Saudi Arabia, which would send it to a satellite, and finally to a B-52 flying overhead, which would download the data to its bombs and drop a bomb on the target. This whole process took only 18 minutes, which is incredibly fast, but 18 minutes is still 18 minutes of time lag, and

against mobile targets 18 minutes is the difference between hitting a target and not. This structure was very effective against static infrastructure, of which there was little, but after about two weeks, it failed to be effective at all; Taliban troops began smearing mud on their vehicles, making them hard to see at distance, and moving their equipment into deep mountain passes and caves, making them difficult to spot from the sky. We can see these lessons in a recent jihadi document found by the Associated Press in Timbuktu,[10] which outlines ways to avoid drone strikes, through avoiding being detected, either through jamming signals or, more simply, putting grass mats over your car when it is parked to avoid being able to be seen from thousands of feet up.

This concealment provided such an advantage that the US was forced to undertake the ground force invasion, which Rumsfeld had opposed before the war began, increasing force concentration and thus footprint and visibility. This also forced the US to build infrastructure, bases, and maintain supply lines, providing targets for insurgent attacks, and beginning the 12 year quagmire that Afghanistan has become. Without heavy deployments of ground forces the US could clear space from the sky, forcing the insurgency underground, sometimes literally, and out of sight, but at the point where they became invisible, it became impossible for small footprint operations to function, and large contingents of ground forces were necessary. This began a dynamic which still continues today; ground forces move into an area, the insurgents disappear, often just going home, and then reappear after the ground forces leave, often with their numbers boosted due to the conflict caused in the initial offensive itself.

While counterinsurgency provides the ability for insurgent counter-attack that is eliminated in counter-terrorism, counter-terrorism operations sacrifice the ability to hold space, and rely all that much more on intelligence, and thus surveillance, raids and interrogation. In this move away from holding space the military is shifting operational modes entirely. Counterinsurgency still relies on spatial concentration,

10 http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/02/22/172714009/in-document-left-behind-by-al-qaida-22-tips-to-avoid-drones-strikes

concentration of force, and the structuring of space around lines of "control". This is a traditionally imperialist notion of space, which assumes that operations define a space inside from a space outside control, and derives from traditional imperialist examples. Counter-terrorism follows from the breakdown of this concept of space and the expansion of security on a global level, as a borderless projection of force. As they shift away from force concentration they also shift away from holding space, and thus the borders of space. This allows them to operate everywhere, but the totality of the operation becomes a necessity. Just as we are seeing in our cities, the attempt to monitor every interaction, catch every conversation the FBI does not like, search every person that may be walking down the street at the wrong time, this total security deployment begins to look more and more like a prison everyday. With the rise of counter-terrorism the borders of war may have dissolved, but only in favor of the expansion of those operations on a global scale.

Counter-terrorism, like the rise of saturation and "community policing", along with the expansion of surveillance has come to construct a situation in which everything seems to be policed through an upward scale of force calculation. Yet, as with counter-insurgency this saturation is still attempting to operate within a paradox, the mobilization of conflict to end conflict. This paradox is the core of the concept of the state, this frantic attempt to construct a unity of time and space through police operations. The expansion of military and police operations into constancy, with an increasing tendency to cover space is nothing but the expansion of the concept of the state in its own realization. The state, which attempts to conceptually define particular moments through transcendental concepts, only functions to the degree that this constancy and totality is the case. This has come to be combined with a specifically post-Enlightenment concept of the state, where the state is no longer seen as a national construct but the embodiment of "universal values". Since the 18th Century there has been an increasing tendency for the state to become borderless. We need to look no further than the concept of American exceptionalism, or any State of

the Union Address during the past 20 years or more to see this.[11] When linked to the concept of a constant security operation, now on a universal scale, this constructs a state of armed inclusion, where all are included, even if force is necessary.[12]

We can, however, take solace in the sheer impossibility of this attempt. Even though the prison is expanding outside of the walls, even though the police seem to be more and more violent and corrupt every day, even though at any moment a document can be signed that sets in motion a process that could end with a flying death robot shooting a missile at your car, this total expansion on a global scale also disperses force. Even in certain concentrations of force, take the French operations in Mali for example, the temporary clearing of space does not mean the permanent clearance of space, or total occupation, without the very concentrations of force, on the ground with a large force footprint, that these operations are meant to avoid; to switch strategic trajectory and occupy space then concentrates force and opens up all sorts of space outside of this concentration. The realization that the military has come to is that they have a choice; they can continue to carry out traditional force scale operations and engage in increasingly violent counterinsurgency campaigns to "clear space permanently", while allowing all sorts of space to proliferate on the margins of these concentrations, or they can abandon the fantasy of a world without resistance and develop security operations as a borderless constancy. But, as they choose this second path they also stretch their force capacity, and fail to ever come to control space.

As in all revolutionary situations, where police logistics are stretched to the point of rupture, the more resistant the terrain becomes on the ground, the more invisible the resisters can become, the more that intelligence networks can be disrupted and communications technology used to our advantage, the more resistance spreads and becomes an increasing

---

11 These addresses, specifically from the Reagan administration to the present day, tend to express a concept of the US as defender of "democratic rights" around the world.

12 In *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21ˢᵗ Century Defense* the need to deploy military force into "ungoverned areas" is discussed openly.

part of the terrain, the less effective these sorts of deployments of force can become. The ability to short-circuit the expansion of the armed inclusion is a tactical question, rather than one of abstract conceptual questions of ethics and politics[13]; a question of the dynamics and possibilities of action in particular moments, the expansion of the terrain and density of conflict in time and space, the question of politics itself, as Schmitt would define it. The only way to escape this trajectory, in which our space increasingly becomes formed by security operations, is to disorganize this constant policing through action, and that is nothing short than action against the logistics of the state itself.

13 It is clear, at least to many of us, that counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism lead to some horrendous consequences, but denunciations, unless used as a tactic of subversion, are not in themselves relevant to the particular discussion of that subversion, which in itself is always a material dynamic, and thus tactical. The way that we make sense of things, and the material dynamic of those events, are two fundamentally separate questions.

Works Cited

Kaplan, Fred (2013), *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, New York, Simon and Schuster

Feickert, Andrew (2013), *Army Drawdown and Restructuring: Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, DC, Congressional Research Service

Department of Defense (2012), *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*

Chivers, CJ (2010), *The Gun*, New York, Simon and Schuster

Galula, David (1964), *Counter-insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, New York, Praeger

Department of the Army (2006), *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency*, Washington DC, Department of the Army

Summers, Harry (1982), *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, Novato, CA, Presidio Press

Weizman, Eyal (2007), *Hollowland*, New York, Verso

Peralta, Eyder (2013), "In Document Left Behind By Al Qaida, 22 Tips To Avoid Drone Strikes", NPR News, http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/02/22/172714009/in-document-left-behind-by-al-qaida-22-tips-to-avoid-drones-strikes, retrieved 2/22/13